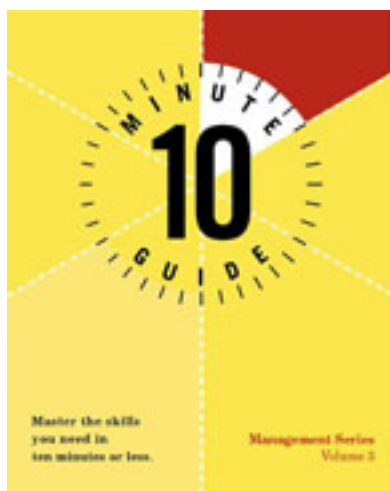


10 Minute Guide to Leadership, Second Edition



10 Minute Guide to Leadership, Second Edition

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Publisher: Alpha
Books



Second Edition July 21,
2000
ISBN: 0-02-863611-2,
168 pages

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for all: Ror, Fly, Downsky, Epubcn, Ru.Board...

10 Minute Guide to Leadership, Second Edition offers quick help for busy people on creating a team vision, inspiring others, and gaining loyalty and support from your staff.

The guide offers a practical, efficient discussion of manipulation, power, micro-management, and personal dynamism

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Introduction

Leadership is never easy. No matter how effortlessly some leaders appear to manage, the path of a leader is one fraught with constant challenge and surprise. However, the leader does not face the challenge alone. By definition, a leader has a group or organization working to meet each challenge and achieve each goal. The leader's job is not to solve every problem alone, but to inspire those he or she leads to solve the problems.

Good leaders recognize that they do not have all the answers and are constantly reeducating themselves on their businesses and sharpening their leadership skills.

In this second edition of the *10 Minute Guide to Leadership*, you will learn the definition of a leader and spend time studying the qualities that are always found in successful leaders.

Beyond personal qualities such as vision and positive thought, a leader must also take careful steps to communicate with his or her staff in the best way possible. Formerly rare processes such as goal-setting, constant feedback, and a system of rewards are now the norm in most workplaces. Some of the most important lessons of this book concentrate on your interactions with your group as a team, but also as individuals.

The later lessons of the book concentrate on some of the unique workplace challenges. For instance, [Lesson 10, "Avoiding Microman-agement,"](#) focuses on the bane of the Dilbertized workplace—the micromanager. [Lessons 14, "Women in Leadership,"](#) and [15, "Young or Minority Leaders,"](#) focus on women and minorities in positions of leadership and the special challenges each faces.

Internet resources are included in the final chapter, which is dedicated to finding help. As the Internet becomes a more central part of our lives and our workplace, familiarizing yourself with it is not only a good idea, but a necessity.

Remember, leaders are not born, but self-made. As you read this book, think about ways you can apply the principles discussed here to your own career.

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Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank two Amys for making my authorship of this book possible. First, Amy Bryant for encouraging me and helping me to find my way to Amy Zavatto at Macmillan USA. Both showed a confidence in my knowledge and ability that helped me to believe I was ready to meet the challenge of writing this book. I'd also like to thank my father, Lieutenant General Thomas W. Kelly, for being a great first leadership teacher, an incredible mentor, and a loving father.

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Lesson 1. What Is Leadership?

In this lesson you will learn the definition of leadership, see the qualities that leaders possess, and discover that leaders are not born, but developed.

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Defining Leadership

When we think of successful, high-profile leaders, we think of people such as General Colin Powell, who led the American forces during the Gulf War; or Bill Gates, the Harvard dropout who founded Microsoft and became the richest man in the world.

In your own field, you can probably name one or two men or women who are successful leaders—people who seem almost visionary and have an intangible knack for getting things right and inspiring their subordinates.

Leaders are able to define a goal, persuade others to assist in achieving that goal, and lead their teams to victory. But what is the definition of leadership?

Leadership is crucial to managers in the business world, but it also plays an important role for coaches, teachers, and parents.

There is not one single definition of leadership. Understanding this is the first step toward becoming an effective leader. Some common definitions or beliefs about leadership include the following:

- A leader is the appointed head of a group, team, or organization.
- A leader is a charismatic person who is able to make good decisions and inspire others to reach a common goal.
- Leadership is the power to communicate assertively and inspire others.
- Leadership is the ability to influence others.

Not one of the preceding definitions is more correct than any of the others. All of the definitions, however, agree on one common fact: Leadership involves more than one person.

You cannot be a leader without a group of people following your direction and putting their trust in you. Remember, as a leader you have a responsibility to your employees, group, organization, or team to lead fairly and ethically. The title "Boss" or "Manager" does not automatically make you a leader.

To be a good leader, you'll need to fortify yourself by keeping up with the latest leadership trends, observing other leaders (including leaders in your own chain of command and leaders in the news), and recognizing that your own unique brand of leadership will change as you gain experience.

Tip

Keep up on the latest leadership trends by reading trade publications, watching the news, and observing successful leaders in your own organization.

Leadership Qualities

As defined in the preceding section, a leader is someone who inspires, who makes decisions that affect the organization in a positive way, and who can pull together a diverse team to work toward a common goal. But if all managers are not leaders, what are the qualities that set leaders apart?

Plain English

Charisma is an almost intangible quality that inspires loyalty and great results from subordinates.

Charisma is one quality that is often mistaken as the most important leadership requirement. However, you can attain charismatic leadership more easily if you work to develop the following qualities:

- **Knowledge.** Know your facts and use them. A leader must know the details of the business in order to act for the entire organization.
- **Trust.** Don't micromanage. If your employees feel you are constantly peering over their shoulders, you will create an atmosphere of distrust. Be aware of what team members are working on, but don't make them feel like "Big Brother" is watching.
- **Integrity.** A leader will be ineffective if subordinates and superiors do not trust him. The organization soon learns to work around a leader who is untrustworthy or does not keep his word. For example, a leader who tells his employees one thing but does another could be viewed as untrustworthy—even if the difference seems inconsequential to you.
- **Standards.** As a leader, your public and private lives should be exemplary. Lead by example. A leader who expects a certain code of conduct from the employees but does not practice the same standards can suffer a loss of respect. A staff that does not respect the leader will suffer a loss in work quality.
- **Decisiveness.** Leaders are valued for their decision-making abilities, especially in high-pressure situations. When confronted with a tough decision, fall back on the knowledge mentioned earlier in this list. The best decisions are decisions made with full possession of the facts.
- **Assertiveness.** Leaders are chosen to lead a team, group, or entire organization. Often, you'll be in situations where your staff is not present—for example, high-level organizational meetings. Your assertiveness can and must represent the employees who have put their trust in you.
- **Optimism.** Be realistic but not fatalistic. Your employees and your superiors may soon lose confidence if they are constantly confronted with pessimism or negativity from you. Situations aren't always ideal, but as a leader you're expected to find the best way to turn the situation around. Figure it out and concentrate on the positive.
- **Results.** A leader has a track record of solid decisions and outcomes to point to. If you've been managing for some time, try to compile a list of successful

decisions and events that you're responsible for. Not only can you point out these successes to others, but you can use them to build your own confidence in your abilities.

- **Vision.** A leader is expected to set goals that will guide an organization in a specific direction. A leader must think broadly and far into the future to set those goals and help the team grow in the right direction.
- **The appearance of power.** As "casual Friday" becomes "casual every day" at a growing number of companies, you still must give off the aura of power in your dress, carriage, and surroundings. In a traditional environment, men should wear suits and remain relatively conservative in their choice of tie and shoes. Women, too, should dress tastefully and err on the side of looking conservative. In a casual environment, both men and women should avoid wearing jeans and T-shirts.

Tip

The qualities that make a leader are charisma, knowledge, trust, integrity, standards, decisiveness, assertiveness, optimism, results, vision, and the appearance of power.

What a Leader Is Not

A leader is not merely the manager who sits in the corner office, the person who controls quitting time and paychecks, or the person who can hire and fire people. Managers in this day and age must be flexible and willing to adapt to an increasingly more demanding and younger workforce that questions authority.

Technology companies have taken the lead in showing that a less autocratic chain of command can produce phenomenal results. Companies such as Bill Gates's Microsoft boast of campus-like atmospheres where permissiveness is no longer the exception, but the rule.

As a leader, you should avoid the following:

- **Micromanagement.** I'll address this in [Lesson 10, "Avoiding Micromanagement,"](#) but for now stop and consider whether you might be keeping too close an eye on your staff or handling too many of the responsibilities in your organization yourself. Are you viewed as overbearing?
- **Closeness.** Steer clear of getting too close to your staff. You are a leader, not your employees' best friend. It's hard to criticize or chastise someone you view as a friend, and even harder for that employee to see the criticism as unbiased.
- **Temper.** Put your negative emotions aside. We're all human, but as a leader you must avoid negative outbursts or personal attacks on coworkers.
- **Arrogance.** You are not a supreme deity. Remember that you wouldn't be a leader without a staff. Avoid autocratic behavior.

A leader is also not synonymous with a manager. Management involves specific business-critical functions such as tending to a budget, developing a product, and generating reports.

However, leadership is an important part of being a manager. A manager who works to improve his or her leadership skills can surpass the status quo to improve the unit's performance.

Caution

Don't confuse management with leadership. Management and leadership are not the same thing. Management involves specific organizational functions such as budgeting and producing a product. Leadership is one part of management that deals with how you communicate with the others in your organization.

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(leadership trait to avoid)

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Becoming a Leader

Some people would have you believe that the best leaders are born that way, and that if you weren't captain of the preschool debate club, you're out of luck when it comes to the ability to be a leader.

Many of the best leaders, however, will point to the fact that they were "C" students, sometimes as late as college. Usually there was a defining event or person in their lives that gave them the confidence to step out of the pack and start leading it.

For you, that moment has arrived. Now you must fortify yourself with knowledge and start thinking like a leader.

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The 30-Second Recap

- There are several definitions of leadership, but a leader is generally considered a charismatic person who is able to make good decisions and inspire others to reach a common goal.
- Leadership qualities include charisma, knowledge, trust, integrity, standards, decisiveness, assertiveness, optimism, results, vision, and the appearance of power.
- Good leaders avoid micromanagement, negativity, and getting too close to subordinates.
- *Manager* and *leader* do not mean the same thing, although leadership is an important part of being a manager.
- The ability to lead is not something you are born with, but something you can develop over time.

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Lesson 2. The Traits of a Leader

In this lesson you'll learn how to use positive thought and talk to your advantage, develop vision, and build your own confidence.

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Positive Thought, Positive Talk

It isn't often that you hear a Super Bowl-winning coach quoted before the game as saying, "Well, I don't think we can win. What a long shot. If we do, no one will be more surprised than me."

Sports teams have made a science of practicing *positive thought* and *positive talk*. You're more likely to hear that Super Bowl-winning coach say, "We know it's going to be hard, but we know we can do it. We're a first-class organization, and this year the players have really honed their skills. It shows in their play."

Positive thought and positive talk are integral to thinking and functioning as a leader. You must learn to face head-on your fears about competition, your abilities, and the abilities of your team or group. Only then can you begin to win and to raise the quality of your team's work to a higher level.

Positive Thought

Just like the coach of that Super Bowl-winning team, you've got to visualize yourself winning. Visualizing the win will help you to take the right actions to achieve the outcome you want.

For example, Dave's group was assigned the high-profile project of redesigning a large part of his company's Web site. Dave had no experience in Web site design. He privately told a trusted friend outside the company that he wasn't sure he could accomplish this task because he had no idea where to begin.

Dave's friend, a practitioner of positive thought, told Dave to think again. He reminded Dave that he had five staff members who were skilled in HTML and Web design. He also reminded Dave that his background was in designing magazine layouts, at which he had been extremely successful. Dave agreed, completed the project successfully,

and ended up winning an award for the site's design.

Here are some key steps in thinking positively:

1. Break a given problem down to its most basic components and deal with each separately.
2. If you deem something as a negative, figure out why: Lack of experience? Past failure?
3. Figure out what you can do to increase your chance of success. For example, if your concern is lack of experience, could you take a class or ask a colleague to help you learn about a particular topic or procedure?
4. View each challenge thrown your way as a chance to lengthen your list of successes.
5. Visualize yourself winning. In the example above, Dave could have thought, "I need to redesign this Web site. I've never done this before, but I've had similar experience and I'm eager to learn. I've got a talented staff, and I know we can do a great job."

Tip

Visualizing yourself winning does not have to apply to a specific situation. If you're new to leadership or striving for a leadership position, concentrate on your assets. You might think positively by saying to yourself, "I know that I am capable of being in a position of greater responsibility. I'm smart, have the right experience, and have great people skills."

Positive Talk

Positive thought will help you visualize successes and increase your chance of success. To project that same confidence in your own abilities and the abilities of your group, however, you must also engage in positive talk.

To refer again to the example of the Super Bowl-winning coach: Not only did the coach feel that his team could win, but he was also quoted in the press as saying his team was going to win, and saying exactly why they were going to win.

Besides the obviously positive effect his words will have on his own coaching and his players' morale, he also inspired confidence in the team's owners and, the most important bosses of all, the fans.

As a leader of a team, group, or organization, you must learn to develop and regularly use positive talk. Positive talk is key to helping your group visualize a win.

When Dave's team heard they were going to redesign a high-profile area on the company's Web site, Dave wasn't the only person who was initially doubtful about their chances for success. The team members themselves were unhappy at having a different kind of work introduced into their routine. Although the team was skilled in HTML, they felt they had enough to do with merely updating the site content daily. One team member even said to the others, "I don't know why they asked us to do this. This is really going to be awful."

After Dave began thinking positively, he addressed his team's misgivings by saying, "I know this is a new challenge for us, but we're going to do this project and we're going to do it on schedule and make it the best site redesign this company has ever seen. This team has more combined Web experience than any other group in this company. We've been given the chance to set the pace, not just keep up. Let's get to work."

Dave's confidence in his team's abilities not only flattered his group, but it made them realize they could do more than they previously thought. Dave made it sound as if it was a given that the redesign would be successful and that it would be because of their contributions.

Dave also inspired the same confidence in his superiors when they asked how he felt the project was progressing. Instead of saying that his team was trying to figure out the redesign, Dave said, "I have to admit this project was a new challenge for my group, but my team loves a new challenge and thrives under pressure. Thanks for the opportunity to showcase my group's abilities."

Caution

Beware of negativity. Negative thoughts will undermine your leadership qualities. Minimizing negative thoughts and talk will help you to think and appear more like a leader. For example, avoid deprecating yourself in thought and talk with negative statements like, "I know nothing about this," "I'm so stupid," or "My opinion probably doesn't count for much, but" Such negativity will only erode your confidence and the confidence your superiors and subordinates have in you.

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Vision

Another important leadership trait is vision. An argument could be made that it is impossible to be a true leader of a group, organization, company, or industry without having vision.

Vision is closely allied with positive thought and positive talk, but involves taking that positivity to the next level.

Plain English

A **vision**, for our purposes, is a leader's ideas and plans for an organization's future. Idealistic in nature, a vision gives a sense of the differences between the present and future states of an organization.

Visionary leaders are often noted for innovations within an organization or industry. For example, Bill Gates is considered a visionary for anticipating that the personal computer could be an indispensable part of every household and then developing the products to make it so.

A leader's vision is extremely important because it gives people something to strive toward: a view beyond the present, into the future of the organization.

Developing Vision

To develop your own vision, try the following exercises:

- **Start with your aspirations.** What are your aspirations? Is there some particular concept, process, or product that you want to develop?

- **Do your research.** Compare your ideas with others in your field by studying books, trade magazines, and Web sites.
- **Spend some time thinking about your organization.** What could you do to improve the organization? What is the single biggest hurdle to success in your unit or the organization as a whole?
- **Think about possible and necessary improvements.** What can you do to improve the organization or unit? Think about both the short term and the long term. This will enable you to set short-term and long-term goals to take steps toward realizing your vision.
- **Think about do-ability.** Are your goals realistic? If your vision points to goals that seem unattainable, is there a way to break down the vision into a simpler form?
- **Use your intuition.** Does your vision make sense?

Communicating Your Vision

Sharing your vision with others, be it your team or your superiors, is an important aspect of leadership. By sharing your vision with your team, you'll let them know they have a manager who is thinking of the organization's future, as well as theirs. By sharing your vision with your superiors, you'll let them know you are an innovative thinker who is not content with the status quo.

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Building Confidence

Confidence in yourself will be bolstered by both positive thinking and by the process of formulating your vision. *Self-confidence*, however, tends to be the result of measurable success.

To build your self-confidence, you might make a list of your assets and past successes, no matter how small they were. Some assets you might list are education or specialized training, the ability to communicate well with others, or a great sense of humor.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Positive thought and positive talk are integral to thinking and functioning as a leader.
- A vision is a leader's ideas and plans for the future of an organization. To be effective, a leader must communicate his vision to his team members as well as his superiors.
- To build your self-confidence, make a list of your assets and past successes.

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Lesson 3. Leadership Styles

In this lesson you'll learn about several different styles of leadership, the merits and downsides to each, and how to determine which style is right for you.

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No Two Are Alike

Just as no two snowflakes are exactly alike, no two people lead in exactly the same way. This lesson, however, outlines several of the most common leadership styles.

Depending on the group he or she has to lead, a successful leader may adhere stringently to the rules of one kind of leadership or can combine aspects of different styles.

Tip

As you read about the different aspects of leadership styles, make notes about concepts that appeal to you or that you think might work in your situation. Don't feel compelled to adhere to one style's set of rules and boundaries. Be flexible.

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Dictatorship

You've probably run across a dictator in your life. Like the political leaders the name is borrowed from, dictators tend to keep decision-making power and most critical knowledge to themselves.

Characteristics of Dictatorship

Here is a list of typical characteristics of a dictator:

- **No questions asked.** The dictator lays down the law in his or her group and expects individuals to perform without questioning his or her authority.
- **Knowledge is power.** The dictator rightly believes that knowledge is one of the keys to power. For this reason, the dictator will often keep most of a unit or organization's critical knowledge to himself and dole out only small portions of information on a need-to-know basis.
- **No mistakes.** The dictator expects performance to be of the highest quality at all times. Mistakes aren't tolerated. Mistakes usually result in dismissal or some other form of punishment for the individual.

When This Style Works Best

The dictator can be particularly effective when a group has gotten out of control and is making little or no effort to actually work. In such cases, the dictator can provide a wake-up call to team members that they are each individually responsible for carrying an equal share of the team's weight.

The Dictator's Downside

The dictator style of leadership can be hard for both the leader and the team members.

The dictator is not known for creating a creative, trusting work environment. The dictator also runs an incredibly high risk of being disliked by his unit.

The dictator will also not reap the benefits of his team's creativity. If the supervisor does not have knowledge of the team's status and objectives, team members may not be able to perform to the best of their abilities.

Caution

Be careful if you practice the dictator style of leadership. Because of the harshness required for this form of leadership, the leader is often perceived as oppressive and unfair.

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The "Almost" Democracy

The "almost" democracy is a bit more lenient than a dictatorship. The leader in this situation strives to make sure the group is well informed and participating in the direction of the team as a whole.

For example, Kate holds regular staff meetings each morning for her team. In the staff meeting, she outlines the agenda she has prepared for the day, then turns the floor over to the staff. The staff can then state their point of view about the agenda or propose an entirely different one. Kate then has the power to agree or veto the staff's ideas.

Characteristics of the "Almost" Democracy

Here is a list of the characteristics of this type of leadership:

- **Participation.** The leader engages the team in most aspects of business, making sure that each team member is equally aware of what is going on throughout the unit.
- **Encouraging debate.** The leader recognizes the value of debate and competition and encourages team members to participate in setting new directions for the unit.
- **Veto power.** The leader's absolute power is what gives this style of leadership the "almost" in its title. Although the leader encourages participation, he or she ultimately will make the final decision on all matters of importance to the unit.

When This Style Works Best

The "almost" democracy works best when you're leading a highly innovative staff that

still needs direction. Although they have tons of ideas, quantity doesn't always equal quality. The leader is responsible for determining right and wrong.

Plain English

For the purposes of this book, **participation** is the act of allowing group members to take part in decision-making, as seen in the "almost" democracy and the partnership styles of leadership.

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The Partnership

The partnership is a drastically different kind of leadership from the styles previously discussed in this lesson. Both the dictatorship and the "almost" democracy maintain a clear boundary between leader and group members. The partnership, however, blurs the line and requires the leader to become just one of the group.

Characteristics of the Partnership

Partnership characteristics include the following:

- **Equality.** The leader becomes just another group member, one who may have more experience, certainly, but one who doesn't really pull more weight than other individuals in the group.
- **Group vision.** All group members participate in decision-making and setting the direction for the unit.
- **Shared responsibility.** All group members are responsible for the results and consequences of the group's actions.

When This Style Works Best

The partnership is a style of leadership that works best with a small group of incredibly experienced or talented individuals. Trust, honesty, and belief in the staff's ability are key ingredients for a partnership to work.

The Downside

The partnership style of leadership can be one of the most rewarding leadership experiences. Not only are you leading, but you are interacting with your group members as equals. However, this is not the style to use if you are concerned about

your authority being undermined.

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Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders go beyond trying to keep individuals and teams performing at the status quo. A transformational leader is one who has the power to bring about change in team members and the organization as a whole.

Plain English

A **transformational leader** is capable of bringing about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.

Characteristics of a Transformational Leader

Transformational leaders distinguish themselves through the following characteristics:

- **Charisma.** A transformational leader is one who has a clear vision for the organization and can easily communicate that vision to group members.
- **Confidence.** A transformational leader has a good business sense and is able to see what decisions will positively affect the organization. This enables the leader to act confidently, inspiring trust in team members.
- **Respect and loyalty.** A transformational leader inspires respect and loyalty in individuals by taking the time to let them know they are important.
- **Expressive praise.** A transformational leader is often expressive in praising individuals and the team on a job well done. Letting people know how much they contributed to one success will steel them for future challenges.

- **Inspiration.** A transformational leader is a master at helping people to do something they weren't sure they were capable of doing. This is achieved through praise and encouraging statements.

When This Style Works Best

Transformational leadership is the ideal style of leadership to use when you need to drastically improve the performance of an individual, group, or organization.

The Downside

Transformational leadership can be a particularly draining style of management. You are responsible for the vision and the means of accomplishing that vision. The transformational leader is also somewhat of a gambler, betting that his or her vision is the right one.

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What Style Is Right for You?

You've read about the dictatorship, the "almost" democracy, the partnership, and transformational leadership. You may have found characteristics of each of those styles that correspond with how you have already been leading. Or you may have found some traits that you'd like to develop.

You may also find that as your group weathers challenges, successes, and changes in the organizational culture, you may need to be a partner one day and a dictator the next. As unpredictable as one individual can be, a group is even more so.

For example, Tom was a newly promoted manager in the sales division of a sporting goods manufacturer. He knew that his group had achieved phenomenal success in the past, but had recently been performing below average since a company-wide reorganization in which the group lost some longtime employees.

Since Tom was a new manager and relatively young, he entered the situation using the partnership method of leadership. He knew that several of the sales division's most decorated members were in his new group. He began by telling the group that their performance had slipped noticeably and let the employees know that he was there to help them regain their spot as the top sales team in the company.

Tom turned to the veterans in his group to find out how they had achieved their past successes and to help diagnose what was holding them back now. He found that they were eager enough to talk about how great and innovative they were in the good old days, but they repeatedly said they didn't have the energy to try again.

Once Tom had established a level of trust and loyalty with his staff, he became a dictator. He needed to jump-start his employees and let them know that they were all directly accountable for the group's success, or lack thereof, and that he expected them to work. Tom ended up having to fire one employee who continually defied his leadership and had never exhibited much skill in sales.

Once his team was working on at least an average level again, Tom morphed into the transformational leader. He inspired even the oldest veterans in the group to try new

sales methods and to strive toward his vision of a 75 percent increase in the group's sales within six months.

By encouraging and stimulating his employees, Tom's group emerged as the leading sales team at the company. Both he and his employees were recognized for their innovation and contributions to the company's success.

Determining Your Style

To determine which style of leadership will work best for you, make two lists: one with your natural leadership traits and one with the goals you need to accomplish within your group.

On the first list, you might include things such as sense of humor, ability to easily communicate, commanding presence, or innovative visionary. When your list is complete, try to see which style of leadership is most closely matched to your traits. You might use that style of leadership as a starting point.

On the second list, compile the goals—large and small—that you'd like to accomplish with your group or organization. What are the hurdles to those goals? Is your staff ineffectual or just in need of intellectual stimulation?

In practical use you'll discover, like Tom in the earlier example, that you will probably combine several leadership styles and aspects of those styles to create your own unique style of leadership.

Leadership style is not determined only by you, but also by the group that you are charged with leading. As stated in [Lesson 1, "What Is Leadership?"](#) you are not a leader if there is no one following you. Be sensitive to the unique challenges the individuals in your group face.

Above all, there are some traits that are always important in a leader, regardless of his or her style: fairness, integrity, honesty, and caring.

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The 30-Second Recap

- No two leaders' styles are alike. Most leaders develop a unique style of leadership that is a combination of several general styles.
- The dictatorship is the harshest form of leadership, in which the leader holds all the power and knowledge. This form of leadership can be considered oppressive and unfair.
- Participation and debate characterize the "almost" democracy, while the leader still reserves most of the decision-making power.
- The partnership blurs the line between leader and subordinates and requires the leader to become just one of the group. All group members are equally responsible for decision-making and taking responsibility for successes and failures.
- A transformational leader brings about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.
- Your own style of leadership will be determined by your natural traits and the needs of your unit or organization.

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Lesson 4. Communicating as a Leader

In this lesson you'll learn how to communicate as a leader using effective language and nonverbal communication.

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The Importance of Communication

One of the most distinguishing traits of a leader is the rare ability to communicate effectively. Knowing the right thing to say and how to say it can make or break your leadership tenure, your team, and your organization.

Plain English

For the purposes of this book, **communication** is the ability to transmit information, thoughts, and ideas so that they are satisfactorily understood by a listener or listeners.

As a leader, you want to satisfactorily communicate information and ideas; however, you also want to communicate them in such a way as to achieve a desired outcome—for example, to convince, motivate, or persuade.

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Using Language Effectively

The first communication tool to master is your own command of language. Practice distilling thoughts into clear, concise, and understandable phrases. Rambling, using slang, and mumbling are not effective.

Try to speak in an audible, clear voice and to speak forcefully in a consistent tone. Speaking forcefully suggests to the listeners that you have power. Mumbling has the opposite effect.

High-Impact Words

Why settle for saying "We did good this year," when you can say "We exceeded performance expectations this year"? The phrases you use in everyday business communication can have a strong impact on the listeners.

Leaders are expected to motivate and inspire; therefore, a leader's use of words is important. Use words that give force to your speech and have an inspirational effect on your group.

To illustrate this, let's rephrase the following statements:

- Great job.
- Any new ideas, John?
- Maybe that other company just needs to watch out.
- I'm sure we'll figure out this sales problem soon.

The preceding statements may be factual, but they are far from being forceful or motivational. Here are the same statements, rephrased using effective language:

- Absolutely phenomenal job.
- Let's get creative. John, what are your thoughts?

- Our competition has good reason to be worried.
- We're on the verge of making a sales philosophy breakthrough.

The revised statements exude power and control of each situation.

Buzzwords

Corporate cultures, and even certain industries, are breeding grounds for buzzwords, or insider terminology that is used within a particular culture.

For example, *offline* is a buzzword recently inspired by Internet companies. "Let's talk about this offline," means that a certain topic should be discussed elsewhere, perhaps not in the context of a meeting, but in a more private setting.

Pay close attention to the buzzwords circulating in your company or industry. Using them correctly could identify you as a player who is aware of the latest trends.

Caution

Take care not to use outdated buzzwords. Doing so could result in a loss of credibility, and will probably at least guarantee you a roll of the eyes from listeners who are bored with the term.

Using Analogies and Metaphors

Analogies and metaphors help effective communication by giving listeners a frame of reference for understanding a concept.

Analogies imply to the listener that if two situations or people agree in one respect, they are likely to agree in several others. The following are some examples of analogies:

- You remind me of Rocky. Sure, you started at the bottom, but you've got ambition and you're working your way to the top.

- Since every American household has a TV, books are going the way of vaudeville—no one is really interested anymore.
- Sure, your computer may have just blown up and you've lost the project you've been working on all year ... but did Scarlett O'Hara give up when the Union soldiers burned down Tara?

A *metaphor* is a figure of speech that compares two objects not ordinarily associated with each other in order to put the first into context.

Here are some examples of metaphors:

- His business sense is impeccable; he's like a bloodhound that can't be shaken off the scent of his prey.
- We're swimming with the sharks now; watch your back.
- The company is being crushed by the weight of this debt. It's time to cut our losses and regroup.

Tip

You're a leader, not a poet. Don't get carried away with using analogies and metaphors in your speech. You might limit yourself to using them only when a listener is having a hard time understanding a particular concept.

Anecdotes

Leaders often use *anecdotes* to weave past successes into inspirational appeals to their groups. Anecdotes are particularly effective because people tend to enjoy hearing them and will remember a point more easily if it's framed in an anecdote.

Subject matter for anecdotes might include the story of an individual whose efforts saved the unit or company from ruin or the effect the company's work has had on a particular customer's life.

The desired result of anecdotes is to inspire the listener(s) to believe that they are capable of achieving similar results. In the preceding two examples, the first lets the individual know that his or her contributions are important and can have a profound effect on the entire organization. The second example helps employees recommit to the idea that the company does provide a beneficial service to consumers and that all of the day-to-day struggles of the business are worth it.

Speeches

Leaders are often called on to make speeches. Public speaking can take place in several different settings. Managers routinely address their groups as a whole and are often required to give prepared presentations to peers or superiors. You may also be required to give a speech before a large group. For some sure-fire tips to great speeches and presentations, see [Lesson 5, "Successful Speeches and Presentations."](#)

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Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is equally important as the ability to use language to your advantage. A leader's attitude, gestures, stance, and appearance all tell people that he or she is a leader.

Plain English

Nonverbal communication is conveying a message or idea without using words—for example, through facial expressions, gestures, stance, or appearance. Also called **body language**.

Exhibiting Assertiveness

A leader must project an air of positive confidence. Part of that confident manner should be in the form of assertiveness. For example, assertive nonverbal communication includes firm handshakes, a relaxed yet forthright posture, and the ability to look other people in the eye.

Kelly was a new manager and wanted to quickly make her mark as a good leader. However, she often slouched during meetings and avoided shaking coworkers' hands. Her shyness also made it hard for her to look people in the eye. Kelly was nonverbally communicating that she was unsure of herself and therefore not assertive.

Jan, who did not have as much experience in the same business, was also a new manager who attended many of the same meetings Kelly attended. Jan made sure to shake hands with her new coworkers, and she always sat a little bit forward with her arms on the table during meetings. When talking, she was sure to meet the eyes of her listeners.

Although Jan didn't have the experience Kelly had, she was able to make a better impression on her new superiors and peers by making them feel confident in her

abilities.

Facial Expressions

Your eyes, mouth, and head convey your attitude more than any other part of your body language. To successfully communicate your leadership qualities, try the following:

- When talking to an individual, give that person your full attention. Looking past that person at another person or off into space will put them off.
- As stated previously, when addressing a group of people, make eye contact. This gives the impression that you really believe in what you are saying.
- Avoid sighing or rolling your eyes when listening to someone else talk. Sighing and eye-rolling give the impression that you are bored. You may be, but there's no need to communicate that fact.

Posture

Your posture also is a big indication of your assertiveness and self-confidence. In the preceding example, posture made all the difference in people's perception of Jan's power. When you're standing, stand straight up with your feet slightly separated and pointed outward. If you're sitting at a conference table, lean forward a bit. If you're sitting at a chair in a lobby or someone's office, relax, but cross your legs and use the chair's armrests. Avoid sinking or slouching in chairs.

Hand Gestures

Hand gestures can be particularly effective at nonverbally communicating your feelings about a particular subject. The "thumbs up," for example, is universally recognized as conveying positive feelings. Some other gestures that may be worth using from time to time include the following:

- Clapping your hands together when things are going right or you hear about a recent success from a group member.

- Using a finger to lend increased weight to a point you're making.
- Gently, but forcefully, punching a fist down on a conference room table to lend weight to a point.

Caution

Avoid using negative gestures such as the middle finger in your business relations. Like profanity, such gestures are not appropriate for the workplace.

Interpersonal Distance

When speaking with one person, try to stay close enough to be able to speak in a normal conversational tone. If you're too far, you may give a standoffish impression. If you're too close, you may risk invading personal space, making your listener uncomfortable.

Personal Appearance

Your choice of clothes, hairstyle, and personal hygiene all make a statement about the type of person you are. Although this may seem superficial, a first impression is often made before you open your mouth to speak.

Leaders should dress appropriately for their position. Also, those who aspire to be leaders should dress for the level they aspire to. For example, if you want to be promoted to the director level at your company and all the directors wear khakis and golf shirts, wear the same type clothing to give them the sense that you are one of them.

The workplace has changed over the past few years, with dress codes loosening. No longer are most men required to wear a three-piece suit to work; nor are women required to wear suits or dresses. A general rule for both men and women is to wear clean, pressed clothes, whether they are formal business attire or casual clothes.

Here are some personal appearance tips for men:

- Avoid wearing jeans. Although jeans may be permitted in your workplace, a leader should avoid wearing them on a regular basis. You might limit yourself to wearing them on a light day, such as a day before a major holiday when you are less likely to have to meet with superiors or clients.
- T-shirts are not appropriate work attire, unless the T-shirt bears a company logo and is worn for a specific reason, such as a company barbecue.
- Hair should be kept clean and neatly trimmed. Many work-places are accepting longer hair on men; however, even long hair should be neatly groomed and worn in a ponytail if it's long enough.
- In most cases, err on the side of the conservative. If you enjoy showing off your tattoos and wearing jewelry, limit this dress to evenings and weekends.
- Keep nails and teeth clean and maintained.

Most of the preceding rules apply to women as well. However, here are some specific personal appearance tips for women:

- Avoid wearing revealing clothing in the workplace. Femininity is a good thing and should be highlighted; however, wearing incredibly short skirts or shirts with plunging necklines is not appropriate at work.
- Don't wear too much perfume. In moderation, perfume adds great flair to personal hygiene. But if you use too much, perfume can be annoying, distracting, and the object of ridicule.

Ultimately, use common sense when it comes to your personal appearance at work.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Communication is the ability to transmit information, thoughts, and ideas so that they are satisfactorily understood by a listener or listeners.
- High-impact words and buzzwords lend force to statements.
- To give an excellent speech, prepare ahead of time, take notes with you, practice, relax, and be ready for questions.
- Nonverbal communication is conveying a message or idea without using words. This includes facial expressions, gestures, posture, interpersonal distance, and personal appearance.

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Lesson 5. Successful Speeches and Presentations

In this chapter, you'll learn how to construct and deliver a successful speech and presentation. You'll also learn how to use visual aids to your advantage.

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The Importance of Public Speaking

Leaders are often called upon to make speeches. One measure of your success as a leader will be how effectively you can communicate, not only in a one-on-one situation, but also to large groups.

Plain English

Public speaking is the act of effectively addressing a large group to orally communicate a new idea or point to the audience.

Public speaking can take place in several different settings.

For example, if you are the head of a product design group at a major car manufacturer, you may need to use public speaking skills in any of the following situations:

- Addressing your team as a whole to reinvigorate their efforts or communicate an important new initiative.
- Giving a presentation to your peers and superiors to share innovations or ideas generated in your group.
- Speaking at an industry convention to carry the banner for your corporation.
- Speaking to investors.
- Heading up an informative session presented to people outside your industry.

Addressing a large group does not only mean speaking in an auditorium. You might

find yourself speaking in a conference room or informally gathered around a team member's desk.

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Speeches

If you are in a position of leadership, the likelihood is that you'll be required to give a speech before a large group. In all cases, the following basic steps will ensure success:

1. **Preparation.** The old Boy Scout motto is a good idea for most situations, not just speeches. By preparing for your speech, you'll be sure to address all the major points you'll need to cover. Many people consider themselves skilled at speaking cold, or without any preparation. However, when speaking cold, an orator is liable to stray from the main point and actually forget to include some important information. This is especially true of those who are new to public speaking.
2. **Notes.** You're not required to make a detailed outline, but it probably won't hurt to carry a basic sketch of your main points on a notecard in case you do lose your train of thought.
3. **Practice.** The mirror is good for more than just checking for gray hairs. Make sure that you are keeping your head up and not focusing solely on those notes, maintaining an assertive posture and sticking to a self-predetermined time limit.
4. **Delivery.** Take a few minutes to relax before delivering your speech. Nervousness can cause a speaker to mumble or rush through words, both of which will detract from your credibility. Also, try to make eye contact with some audience members while speaking. Connecting with your audience is an important means of gauging their reaction.
5. **Embrace spontaneity.** Know your facts and be prepared to take questions from your audience, or modify your speech if you sense that a particular point is not hitting home. As long as you are well-versed in your subject matter, you should easily be able to make small deviations from your outline.

Tip

A long speech does not necessarily a good speech make. Often, audiences get impatient listening to a speaker, no matter how good, talk about the same subject for an extended period of time. The quicker a case can be made, sometimes the quicker you can win the favor of an audience.

Who Are You Talking To?

In addition to the preceding step-by-step tips, make sure that you tailor your speech to the crowd you're addressing.

For example, Sandy works for an Internet company and needs to speak to two groups in the same day. Sandy needs to explain the importance of the online world to a group of first-graders, then to a group of senior citizens.

Although both of Sandy's speeches will likely contain much of the same information, she'll tailor each speech to make the most sense to the group she's addressing. She might stress the incredible educational resources to the first-graders, while highlighting the merits of e-mail for keeping in touch with far-flung friends and family to the senior audience.

Caution

The president and presenters at the Oscars have the benefit of a teleprompter when speech-making. Most of us do not. Don't type up your entire speech and read it to your audience word by word. As mentioned above, brief notes of key points should be enough to help you through your speech.

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Presentations

A presentation is merely a variation on a speech. What differentiates the two? A presentation usually uses some other medium or component to help along the point, not only relying on oral communication.

For example, in addition to a speech, someone giving a presentation may use visual aids such as prototypes of a product, audio clips, or visual aids.

Visual Aids

Visual aids can be an effective way of selling your point. You can tell a group 50 different ways how new and exciting a product is, but until they see it for themselves, they're not likely to be completely swayed by your enthusiasm.

For example, Lana, a video-game designer, was giving a presentation about her group's newest game. She felt strongly that the game would be the next big thing in the gaming world.

Lana gave a presentation outlining the game's innovations in graphics, action and storyline. She explained to the marketing group how the game's characters were so cute and cutting edge that they'd be sure to have a huge market for crossover products like cartoons, toys, and lunchboxes.

Lana's audience listened patiently to her speech. Having heard the same enthusiasm from most group leaders, the audience was skeptical. It wasn't until Lana dimmed the lights and gave a fully functional demonstration of the game that she won over the crowd.

Visual aids can take on several forms, from the cheap and basic to the expensive and elaborate. The visual aid you choose to use will depend on your crowd, your subject matter, and your budget:

- **White board or chalkboard.** Both serve the same function of allowing you to illustrate a point graphically while giving your presentation. You might use a

white or chalkboard to illustrate a design concept or make lists of ideas brainstormed by your audience.

- **Photocopied handouts.** A photocopied handout might contain the main points of your speech or be used to illustrate points with statistics or graphs. The advantage of a handout is that it gives your audience something to take away with them when the presentation is over. This will help your audience be able to more easily jog their memories or illustrate your point to others.
- **Prototypes or product samples.** If trying to sell a new or already existing product, you might pass around a real, tangible example of that product. For example, if you make stuffed animals and have a new unicorn doll to market, you might bring samples.
- **Audio and video.** A multimedia presentation might be the way to illustrate your point. Supporting material, like testimonials or examples of your concept or product in use could be highlighted using audio or video.
- **Overhead projector.** Stop picturing the prehistoric overhead projector from elementary school. The latest generation of overhead projectors can do everything from printing out what you've written on the overhead to projecting a computer screen.
- **Presentation software.** Several software packages, like Microsoft's PowerPoint, are designed to help you give a richer, fuller presentation. Not only can you create an outline and slides to carry you throughout your presentation on an overhead screen, but you can also print out the presentations to use as handouts. In addition, you can save the presentation to disk to send to far-away audiences.

Caution

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that a really neat visual aid will do all the work and carry your point for you. In the final analysis, your speech and subject matter must be the emphasis.

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If You Get Nervous

If you've ever experienced cold sweats and stuttering when giving a speech or making a presentation, you are not alone. It is common for unpracticed public speakers to get a case of nerves or an anxiety attack when confronted with a room (no matter the size) focused entirely on you.

Remember that the nerves usually only last for the first few minutes. Once you sense that your audience is responding to your presentation, you'll realize that the focus is on the subject matter, not you.

The following tips should also help you through a case of public speaking jitters:

- **Know your material.** Try to avoid getting in the situation of giving a speech or presentation on unfamiliar subject matter. If you know your stuff, you'll get past the few minutes of nervousness once the facts you so carefully studied come to your aid.
- **Relax.** Take a deep breath and don't rush yourself. Unless you're participating in a timed debate, there's no need to deliver your speech or presentation at break-neck speed.
- **Don't mention it.** Don't tell your audience about your case of nerves. They probably didn't notice it and if you mention something, you'll be alerting them to the fact that you're less than at ease.
- **Get more experience.** Try to practice public speaking, in small and large forums, as often as possible. For example, you might practice in front of the mirror or your family. Or, better yet, make it a regular event to speak to your staff. This will give you the confidence of speaking to an audience while in a familiar setting.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Public speaking is the act of effectively addressing a large group to orally communicate a new idea or point to the audience.
- Steps to giving a successful speech are prepare, make notes, practice, and embrace spontaneity.
- A presentation usually uses some other medium or component to help along the point, not relying on oral communication only.
- Visual aids include paper handouts, white and chalkboards, product samples, audio and video materials, overhead projectors, and presentation software.
- If you get nervous, relax and rely on the fact that you know your material.

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Lesson 6. Managing Performance

In this lesson you'll learn how to set goals for your group, how to encourage teamwork, how to manage telecommuters, and how to use feedback and rewards.

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Setting Goals

As a leader, it is your job to have a vision for the work your unit or organization does and how that work is to be accomplished.

But how can you make sure that your vision becomes a reality? A large task, such as creating a new ad campaign or starting a new season for a sports club, can seem daunting. To ensure success, you will need to break that large task down into attainable *goals*. Breaking a job down into its simplest form makes it more probable that the job will be done and done right.

For the manager whose team is working on that new ad campaign, that may mean setting a goal-oriented timeline that specifies that certain parts of the job be done in increments. For example, the outline of the advertising concept is due in week one, the copy in week two, the artwork in week three, and so on.

Or, for the coach of the sports team at the beginning of a new season, it may mean tasking a particular player to improve his swing or kick by a small amount in that season. Improving even one player's performance by a small increment can have a huge benefit for the team as a whole.

Plain English

Goals are specific metrics you set for your group to accomplish. Goals benefit an organization in two ways by giving you a way to measure performance and by creating a realistic, simpler way to accomplish large tasks.

Group Goals

To ensure that your group is working to fulfill your vision, you must make sure that you

have clearly communicated your expectations to them. A team cannot function without knowing your idea of the group's immediate and long-range goals and, if you work in a corporate environment, the goals and vision of the larger organization.

Mission Statements

This is where a mission statement may come in handy. A mission statement is a small document that outlines the overarching business philosophy and ultimate goal of your organization.

If your company has a mission statement, make sure that you have a copy of it handy. You could post it in a common area that your group uses.

America Online's mission statement is "To build a global medium as central to people's lives as the telephone or television ... and even more valuable." This statement is posted throughout the company's offices on plaques. Although this is clearly not a goal that could be achieved in a year, employees are aware of what they are all working toward and can think about their work in relation to that mission statement.

If your company does not have a mission statement, or you are leading a smaller group or organization, try crafting your own mission statement.

The Measure of Success

Any industry has measures of success. If you're a sports team, you have a record of wins and losses. If you are a media company, you have your ratings in relation to other media companies. If you are a sales team, you have sales figures.

Don't keep the measures of success a secret from your staff. Hold regular meetings to let them know how successful their work is and what they'll need to do to improve their standings.

Tip

Give your staff the benefit of knowing your organizational goals through a mission statement or by sharing your unit's metrics with them. Remember, they can't do what you want until they know what you expect.

Individual Goals

As stated previously, to function as a unit your staff must be aware of overall organizational goals. However, your people must also have individual goals.

As stated in the definition at the beginning of this lesson, goals give you a way to measure an individual's performance compared to other staff members and against his or her own past performance.

There are some rules for goal-setting that you should know before having the first meetings with your staff:

- **Have a job description.** The most important aspect to goal-setting for individuals is to make sure they have a job description. It sounds simple, but many organizations don't think giving employees clear and detailed job descriptions is a priority; instead, they expect employees to figure it out on their own. This can result in lost time while an individual does the figuring out, as well as more lost time and resources when the individual arrives at the wrong conclusion.
- **Have realistic expectations.** Make sure the goals you set for an individual are realistic. For example, Ken asked Sandra to write a 200-page report by the end of the week. This was an unrealistic goal.
- **Be specific when assigning goals.** The method of measurement must be clear. For example, Charles asked Amy and Chris to each create 10 Web pages for the company site. Amy finished her portion of the pages in two weeks, whereas Charles finished only half of his work by then. Charles should not be penalized because a time limit was not set. To take this one step further, Amy may have seen time as the most important factor in the assignment, whereas Charles may have considered research and well-rounded pages to be the top priority. You must be as specific as possible when assigning goals.
- **Distinguish between formal and informal goals.** There are several types of

goals for individuals. It must be made clear whether a goal is formal or not and whether a specific reward is tied to the accomplishment of that goal. For example, are the goals written on paper and tied to a yearly review, or are the goals more abstract? An abstract goal might be asking an employee to casually learn more about a given aspect of the business.

Although goals can go a long way toward keeping your staff on track, mistakes will be made. Practice tolerance. Employees can often learn just as well from their failures and mistakes as they can from their successes.

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Fostering Teamwork

Goal-setting can help an individual to realize a higher level of personal achievement. You should place an equal emphasis on encouraging teamwork within a group.

A healthy level of competition is good and can keep employees striving to do a better job. Taken too far, however, that competition can become a detriment as the various individuals that make up the whole fail to pull in the same direction.

To encourage and cultivate teamwork within a group, a leader might do the following:

- **Build trust among staff members.** Encourage honesty and the open expression of opinion among group members.
- **Reward people who contribute to the team.** A leader might make a point of the importance of teamwork in an individual's evaluation. Let employees know that they are not only judged on personal achievement, but also on their ability to sacrifice personal glory for the greater good of the unit.
- **Use terms like "we" and "us" when referring to your group's work as a whole.** This will reinforce the idea that they were an integral part of your unit's performance.
- **Handpick your team.** Nothing encourages teamwork like actually handpicking a team. Choose members of your group who you think could potentially work well together and assign a joint project to them.

Caution

Don't let teamwork stand in the way of dealing with an employee who is not performing up to the standards you've set. The team environment can make it difficult to recognize and correct subpar performance. Be aware of whether team

members are pulling equal loads.

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Managing Telecommuters

Personal computers, modems, and the Internet have made it possible for a growing percentage of the workforce to work from home. *Telecommuting* is particularly popular with part-time employees who may have more than one job, mothers who want to remain on the job while raising small children, and those who would just rather not deal with the hassle of a commute on a daily basis.

This new cyber workforce creates new challenges for today's leaders. It is difficult to ensure that employees with no immediate supervision will actually perform as well as employees in a typical work environment.

Give these employees a sense of teamwork and accountability in the following ways:

- Send e-mail and make regular telephone calls to keep the employee in the loop.
- Include these remote staffers in group meetings. Most conference rooms are now equipped with speakerphones. However, if geographically possible, ask your telecommuters to come in to the office for departmental meetings and other important events.
- Establish clear measures of success, since you can't be there to look over the shoulder of someone who is working from home.
- Request a weekly report from your at-home workers each Friday to keep up with what they've been working on.

Plain English

A **telecommuter** is an employee who works from home, often linked to a central office by computer.

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Feedback and Rewards

Although feedback and rewards are two different aspects of reacting to your employees' work, they are often tied together. For example, after landing a major new account, Jennifer's boss told her that not only was he pleased with how she performed, but that she would be receiving a bonus for her good work.

Both feedback and rewards give employees a sense of how well they've done their jobs in the eyes of their manager and the organization.

Feedback

Feedback is vital to the health of a unit. A leader must communicate feedback effectively to a staff in order to get desired results and improved future performance.

As a leader and manager of people, you'll be required to give both negative and positive feedback. Both are necessary, although positive feedback may be the easier of the two to communicate.

Positive feedback should be given when an employee is performing a task right, innovating with success, or surpassing previous performance.

Be sure to give feedback that specifies exactly what was good. Avoid generalizations such as, "You're doing a great job." They may not sound believable, and they don't really let an employee know what he or she is doing right.

Negative feedback is also integral to molding or changing a group or individual's performance. Again, make sure that you are specific about the undesired action or behavior and avoid criticizing a person's personality traits.

For example, John continually makes the same mistakes, although his peers and his boss have corrected his work several times. Instead of telling John that he is

hard-headed or just not getting it, his boss continues to tell him the exact nature of the mistake and gives him a cheat-sheet to use when performing the task in the future.

The cheat-sheet is an example of the other half of negative feedback. The feedback alone will tell a group member he or she has done something wrong. To correct that behavior, however, you must also explain how to fix the problem or teach the employee how to perform correctly.

Tip

You may also want to solicit feedback from your group members. This will help in promoting a teamwork atmosphere and let employees know that you value their opinions.

You should also draw a clear line between formal and informal feedback. Formal feedback is in the form of written yearly reviews that gauge an employee's performance and are tied to raises and promotions. Informal feedback most often takes the form of oral comments—for example, telling an employee he did a great job on a specific task and how.

You should try to give both positive and negative informal feedback often to keep your employees working in the desired manner.

Rewards

Rewards for desired performance can take many forms. Along with feedback, rewards are how you let an employee know he or she has done something right.

Rewarding desired performance can motivate a group to push themselves. Rewards make extraordinary individual efforts and teamwork worth it for your staff.

Rewards can take several forms, including the following:

- **Promotions.** When an employee consistently performs up to the standard you have set and beyond it, you might consider promoting that employee. This

rewards the employee by giving him or her increased responsibility and stature in the organization.

- **Raises.** Usually tied to yearly reviews, raises are the most common form of rewarding employees. However, most organizations are in the habit of giving raises to employees every year, regardless of performance. There should be a scale outlining a range of raises tied to specific performance. For example, you might give an employee who is reliable but not stellar a 3 percent raise, while giving your star performer an 8 percent increase in salary.
- **Bonuses.** A bonus is standard in some industries, such as sales, where employees are given bonuses tied to the amount of business they pull in for the company. In others, bonuses are given at the holidays or to reward an outstanding achievement. If you or your organization has a policy on bonuses, make sure your employees are aware of that policy.
- **Fame.** Complimenting an employee may not sound like a huge reward. However, complimenting an employee on a job well done at a staff meeting or in front of company officers can be extremely rewarding.
- **Increased trust.** If an employee consistently performs outstanding work and meets individual and team goals, you might reward that employee by giving him increased trust. For example, Jim often accomplishes tasks before he's asked and has saved the company money by streamlining reporting protocol. Jim's boss not only rewarded him with a raise, but gave him the freedom to work in a more self-directed manner.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Individual and group goals give you and your employees a method for measuring success.
- Goals can also break down large tasks into more basic tasks, which gives you a higher chance of success.
- Teamwork makes a group more effective by ensuring that all are working toward the same goals.
- Stay in regular contact with telecommuters to measure the amount of work done or their success in doing it.
- A leader must communicate feedback effectively to a staff in order to obtain desired results and improved future performance.
- Rewards take several forms, including promotions, raises, bonuses, fame, and increased trust.

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Lesson 7. Improving Your Team

In this lesson you'll learn how to give your team members more confidence, delegate, and advertise your group, as well as the importance of respecting seniority.

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Giving Your Team Confidence

In [Lesson 6, "Managing Performance,"](#) you learned how to set goals and encourage teamwork in your group. Now you'll read about some more subtle methods of improving your team.

One important aspect of your team's performance is their level of confidence in their leadership, their goals, and their own work. One way that you can project confidence in your group is to show through offhanded actions and words that you believe in them.

For example, Samantha knew her department was capable of raising yearly sales levels by at least 15 percent. They had the products, the know-how, and the time to really pull it off. But she noticed a certain amount of uncertainty and self-doubt in her staff members.

At the next morning staff meeting, Samantha told her group they were getting close to breaking last year's sales record and said, "You guys are going to come in 15 percent over last year if you keep this up. Wow." By stating her desired and attainable goal as a given, Samantha let her team know how confident she was in their abilities.

You can project confidence to your group with blanket statements as well, such as telling an employee she always does a great job. The more specific you make these statements, the more believable they will be.

You can also project confidence in your team in several other ways, including the following:

- **Take ability as a given.** If you're convinced someone can do a particular job, but the person is not sure of his her own abilities, verbally acknowledge those abilities as a given. You might say, "I know you'll be great at this because"
- **Give compliments.** A leader should always compliment employees on a job

well done. No task done well is too big or small to be recognized.

- **Assign confidence-building projects.** Assign smaller projects that will stretch a team member's responsibility a little bit at a time. The fact that the projects are smaller in scope will allow the team member to accrue successes quickly, building the individual's confidence.
- **Reinforce confidence.** People cannot live on confidence alone. Back up your confidence in your group by rewarding them with raises, bonuses, and promotions, or by recognizing their contributions publicly.
- **Acknowledge the winning team.** Let your employees know they are part of a winning team by referring to it as such. For example, tell them they really make you look good and that their hard work is not going unnoticed in the larger organization. This will redouble each individual's desire to perform and not let the team down.

Caution

Concentrate on building your team's confidence, but remember to be realistic. Never lead someone to believe that he or she can do something that is just not feasible. If an individual fails, your statements will have the opposite effect of shattering his or her confidence.

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Delegating

Delegation is critical to the success of your unit or organization. A leader or manager must recognize that he or she cannot do all of the work alone.

To illustrate the point, let's look at two units in the same company. Both managers are faced with a tight deadline to get a certain project done for the company.

The first manager understands the critical time element involved. Because time is so tight, he won't have time later to go back to reconsider and recheck work. He's noticed a few mistakes his team members have made in the past, so he opts to do most of the project himself.

The second manager also understands the critical time element and that there isn't much time to review the work before turning it in. However, she feels she can accomplish more by breaking the project into specific parts and delegating each part to a member of her group. That frees her to check the work, since she, too, has noticed some mistakes from her group in the past.

Both managers turned in their projects at the same time. However, the second manager's project was much more complete, thoughtful, and effective than the first manager's, who overburdened himself and ended up sacrificing quality to just get the job done.

Plain English

Delegation, in this context, means sharing tasks and authority with your team to more effectively and quickly accomplish goals—for example, breaking a job down into simpler parts and assigning those parts to different people in your group.

Most managers think that they already delegate responsibilities in their group. However, too often the tasks that end up being delegated are mundane, tedious, or extremely difficult.

To keep your group's interest level up, try delegating some of the more interesting and exciting tasks. Sure, it may mean that you have to give up something that you would have preferred to do yourself, such as attend a business conference in a tropical locale, but you'll raise morale by showing your team that you are willing to share the better assignments.

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Respecting Seniority

Leaders often enter a new job situation with a specific idea of the direction they'd like to take and what they'd like to do with their human resources. However, a new leader can create problems by not recognizing the pecking order in an existing workplace and not listening to the voice of experience from employees who have been on the job for a long time.

For example, John had been the director of marketing for a Fortune 500 company for a month. He had a reputation for producing maximum quality in the minimum amount of time at his last job. On his first day, John told his team the results he expected from the group and reassigned each team member to new tasks. Two employees who had been with the department for years told John that his "new" plan had already been tried by a previous boss and that a couple of the people in the group were terrible at the tasks he'd assigned.

John considered himself a good manager and an even better leader, so he thanked the two employees—whom he considered a bit out of line—for their input but told them he would stick to his original plan.

By dismissing the advice of the senior employees, John made two enemies on his first day at work. Not only did he lose their initial support, but he lost the support of the rest of the staff, who respected the two senior employees.

As a result, quality did not immediately begin to rise in the department. John recognized this and decided things would go more smoothly with the senior employees on his side. He was right. Once he listened to their advice again, he realized it was good advice and modified his plan a bit. Quality rose and people were happy.

Tip

Seniority doesn't mean an employee has gray hair or has been with a company for

20 years. In today's fast-paced business world, a senior employee could be a 28-year-old who has been with a company for four years. Make friends, not enemies, out of these employees. Often they can speak to the performance history of a department and act as a barometer of the staff's morale.

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Advertising Your Group

Often it is not enough that a unit or group within an organization turns in top performance or provides a key component of the organization's success. If you don't advertise your successes, they could blend into the background of day-to-day corporate work. Advertising your group not only benefits you, but it also benefits your employees and department as a whole.

Senior managers are often not technically literate about the work that different departments in their organizations do. By advertising your group, a leader can make sure senior managers have some idea of the work that's being done.

In addition, if the senior management is aware of the contribution your department makes, it could help ensure that your department is not hit when the budget ax starts swinging.

Some ways to advertise your group include the following:

- **Share accomplishments.** When meeting with your superiors, be sure to mention a recent success your group has accomplished.
- **Share the spotlight.** Mention specific team members who contributed significantly to a success. Your superiors and your subordinates will value the fact that you are not just attributing the success to yourself.
- **Share success with superiors.** When acknowledging an individual or team's work on a particular success via e-mail, send a copy of the message to your superiors.

Tip

Make a point of not advertising your group every time you meet with your superiors.

You don't want to give the impression that you are a braggart or insecure about your unit.

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Hiring and Firing

As a leader, you are responsible for hiring and firing the members of your team. Although it may seem much easier to give a person a job than to take a job away from a person, both tasks are equally challenging.

Hiring

Like choosing a jury in an important case, hiring your team is a critical decision, one that can have a huge impact on your team's success. You need to be aware of how an individual will change the dynamics of your unit or organization.

When hiring, first consult your company's human resources department to see whether any seminars or company policies about interviewing are offered.

Here are some tips on successful hiring:

- **Interview and interview again.** Interview the promising potential job candidates at least twice. The second interview gives you the luxury of finding out whether you get the same impression twice. Some people will put all of their energy into one typical interview. The process of performing a second time may force a job candidate to give more than the usual interview answers.
- **Don't be the only interviewer.** Allow potential job candidates to talk to other members of your team while interviewing. The answers an interviewee gives to a junior member of the staff may be more relaxed and more enlightening. The group style of interviewing also gives potential employees a broader sense of the culture in your group.
- **Probe for results.** People often speak in broad generalizations about past performance. Ask job candidates to point to specific results they've achieved in the past.

- **Find out about the candidate's behavior and character.** In addition to asking job candidates about specific results, try to find out how their mind works and if their work philosophy will mesh with your team. (This is also known as *behavioral interviewing*.)
- **Limit your questions.** Remember, some questions are considered discriminatory in interviews. For example, questions about age, nationality, race, or sexual preference are considered inappropriate and could have legal ramifications. Consult your human resources department if you are not sure about a particular question.

Caution

The interview process can be as short or as long as you deem necessary. Some swear that a first impression is the right one, but take your time and interview thoroughly. Spending the time to hire the right person will keep you from having to deal with problems in the future.

Firing

No matter how arduous the process of hiring employees may be, firing is something that most managers never get used to. But part of successful leadership is knowing when to cull the herd and taking the required action.

If you notice a member of your team is consistently not performing up to the standards of the group, first meet with the individual to determine the reason for the subpar performance. Employees can often be affected by trouble outside the workplace, such as a souring relationship, financial difficulties, illness, or a family member's illness. In these cases, the best course of action may be to simply let the employee know you are there and that you understand the conditions leading to their diminished performance.

In all other cases, such as good old-fashioned laziness or stubbornness, consider giving the individual a warning before taking the steps to terminate employment.

For example, Stacie was new to the department and had never been pushed to

perform at her last job. She was consistently doing less work than the other employees, which was lowering the overall quality of work done by the department and creating resentment in the other employees.

Stacie's manager, Vince, decided to meet with Stacie to find the cause of her lack of commitment to her job and give her a written warning that she needed to improve her performance. Confronted with the written warning, Stacie realized that she needed to apply herself. Over the next six months, Stacie improved her performance considerably. Vince congratulated her on the improvement and let her know her job was secure.

If none of the preceding reasons or warnings work to improve an employee's performance, you may need to terminate that employee.

Again, consult with your company's human resources department if it has one. If not, you can find rules for terminating employment from local and federal government agencies or a lawyer who specializes in labor issues.

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The 30-Second Recap

- To project confidence in your group, show through specific and offhanded actions and words that you believe in them.
- Delegating means sharing tasks and authority with your team.
- Advertise your unit's successes throughout your organization to ensure credit and recognition for your team.
- Hiring new employees is a critical decision, one that can have a huge impact on your team's success.
- To hire successfully, interview more than once, allow several group members to talk to the job candidate, and avoid discriminatory questions.
- When an employee's performance is not meeting standards, try to determine the cause of the trouble or give the employee a written warning.
- If you must terminate an employee, consult your human resources department, a lawyer, or the appropriate government agency to make sure you are terminating employment correctly.

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Lesson 8. Worst Leadership Mistakes

In this chapter, you'll learn about some of the common pitfalls people in a position of leadership fall into and how to avoid them.

Although a leader may strive to manage performance, inspire her team, and gain the support and trust of that team, things don't always turn out as planned.

Caution

Don't overestimate yourself. If you go into a leadership situation thinking you're prepared for and capable of handling any and every situation, think again. A modest amount of egotism is inherent in any leader, but a true leader also recognizes the fact that she will learn as much from her team as her team will learn from her.

If a new leader, you may find yourself in a situation where you are expected to manage a team that has been allowed to become lethargic—in other words, a team that is not used to being led by an effective manager.

Or, you may have an ideal team except for one problem employee. One bad apple may not spoil the whole bunch, but can go a long way toward derailing the goals of the whole bunch.

Last, the new leader may let his lack of management experience show by over-reacting or letting his team see that they are capable of playing on his weaknesses.

Whatever the case, there will be bumps along the road for any manager or leader. Why? Because managing humans is much harder than managing the most sophisticated computers. Humans are complicated, diverse, and imperfect. While those diversities and imperfections are often things to be celebrated, they provide unlimited

opportunities for friction.

This chapter touches on some of the most common mistakes made by leaders, new and old, and offers alternatives and solutions to help avoid these situations.

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Hey, We're All Best Buddies Here

A leader is put into a position of responsibility at the head of a team or organization to provide guidance and direction to that organization.

However, some leaders make the mistake of becoming too friendly with their team. While an amicable working relationship with a staff is better than a hostile one, overfriendly leader/subordinate relationships can backfire in several ways:

- **Lack of respect.** If team members view you as "just one of the gang," chances are their willingness to defer to your judgment will evaporate.
- **Lack of motivation.** Team members may start to slack off on accomplishing team goals and even mundane workday tasks. Why should they break their back to impress you when a "friend" wouldn't give them a bad review or withhold a raise?
- **Blurred lines.** The boundary between friendship and inappropriate relationships is a blurry and ever-changing mark. Being over-friendly, physically or verbally, could be construed as flirtation.
- **Leap-frogging.** While a leader may forget his place is at the head of the team, you can bet there's a team member who remembers and may try to quietly bring in a major project on his own. Of course, the first person he'll let in on the secret is your boss.

In the final analysis, no one wants to work for an ogre, but employees will be much happier working for someone who sets limits and does not try to be their best friend.

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Micromanaging

Have you ever worked for someone who looked over your shoulder and seemed to always be ready to do your job for you? If so, you've been in the presence of a micromanager.

Micromanagement is the subject of [Lesson 10, "Avoiding Micromanagement."](#) So, briefly put, micromanagement is the practice of exercising an undue amount of control over one's team. This usually stems from a lack of trust or a feeling of being out of control.

Micromanagement does not work. A leader's job is to identify a vision for the organization, set goals, and delegate authority and tasks to accomplish those goals.

The micromanager tries to accomplish everything himself and ends up with either subquality work or several unfinished tasks.

The solution? Learn to loosen the reins, delegate, and read [Lesson 10](#) for a more in-depth look at the subject.

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Thin Skin

As a leader, your qualities must include the ability to stay above the fray. Don't take things personally, even if a team member baits you with a snide remark or hostile behavior.

For example, Dan had been the head of the textile department at a North Carolina furniture manufacturer for a year. In his short tenure, his department's productivity and quality had sky-rocketed, largely due to his unorthodox and easy-going management style.

However, one employee was always going after him during meetings. If Dan was giving a presentation to his group about a new process, Bret would interrupt and tell him in no uncertain terms that he thought the idea was bogus and that he had a better one.

Sometimes Bret was right, but even so, he needed to learn that there is a time, place, and polite way to debate with his boss.

After several such incidents, Dan lost his cool, called Bret into his office and told him he would be transferred to another department because Dan could not work with him anymore.

Needless to say, Dan reacted inappropriately. He mistook Bret's attacks as being directed at him, instead of at the subject matter of his presentations or ideas.

To defuse Bret's interruptions, Dan might have instituted a new policy of asking his entire team to hold all comments until the end of his presentations or even asked them to send their comments via e-mail.

As a leader, you do the getting along. Never let an employee see that she is capable of getting to you and pushing the right buttons.

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Do as I Say, Not as I Do

A leader must be prepared to live by the rules she sets for her team. Asking your team to put in excessive hours or maintain certain standards will be meaningless unless you, too, work excessive hours and adhere to those standards.

Tip

Sometimes the best lesson a leader can give is to roll up her sleeves and show her team how she expects them to work. You may not even need to let them in on the fact that you're trying to get the same performance out of them. Often, the example stands on its own.

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Don't Forget to Tip

If a waiter gives good service, the societal norm is to leave that waiter a tip. The better the service, the better the tip. The same applies to the work done by your team.

As discussed in [Lesson 6, "Managing Performance,"](#) valued work behaviors must be outlined, then rewarded when achieved. Too often, employees strive to produce excellent results, only to find that the promise of a raise or increased responsibility will not happen.

Once employees realize that the raise is never coming or that you are trying to limit their careers by keeping them in the same jobs, they'll decide to move on.

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My Cousin Vinnie

Sometimes the tendency for a new leader is to replace key employees with people that leader has worked with in the past.

Sure, you've worked with this person, so you know he'll work hard and probably deliver any objectives that you set before him.

However, if you assume leadership of a new group, then set about either firing existing employees to make room for your desired hires, or create new positions for those hires, you're likely to win one big prize: the animosity of the rest of the staff.

While they may have welcomed you with an open mind, they'll start resenting you if you immediately pass them over for promotions.

When you assume a new leadership position, take some time (if you have it) to evaluate the group you've been charged with leading. You may be surprised to find a group, or individuals, who work hard and are ready to take their efforts to the next level.

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Don't Compete with Your Group

Some leaders make the fatal mistake of viewing their group as competition.

These leaders are constantly keeping vital information to themselves, only to spring it on the staff very late in the game, in the hopes that they will be able to one-up their staff.

Part of the leader/subordinate dynamic you set for your group must be to make sure that your employees understand they work for you, not for your boss.

Let them know that their job is to achieve the team objectives, not to achieve personal objectives. Your job is the same.

And, if you feel an employee is excellent at her work and really should move on, try to facilitate that step up the ladder. You'll be recognized as a true leader and not mistaken for a paranoid dictator.

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The 30-Second Recap

Some leadership mistakes to avoid include:

- Being over-friendly with your team
- Micromanagement
- Letting employees get to you personally
- Asking employees to do tasks or perform up to levels you are not prepared to do
- Passing over an existing staff for new positions or promotions to bring in old friends
- Viewing staff as competition

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Lesson 9. Nonstandard Techniques

In this lesson you'll learn how to encourage and direct creativity, when to use humor, and how to ethically persuade and manipulate your team.

Plain English

Creativity is using your imagination to innovate or create something that is not an imitation of anything else.

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Encouraging Creativity

The old adage rings true: Two heads really can be better than one, especially when they're freed to think "outside the box."

Creativity can do wonders for an organization. New ideas coming from more than one employee can greatly benefit a company by harnessing the intellectual capital of a staff and encouraging conflict of ideas to arrive at the best possible outcome.

Different employees are gifted in different ways. For example, whereas Mary may excel at customer service innovations, Scott's forte may be redesigning the way you present printed materials to your customers.

Four Types of Thinkers

In a study, the Strategic Leadership Forum found four specific styles of thinking:

- **Knowers.** Best at facts and able to quickly sort data, knowers are good with numbers and technical systems.
- **Conciliators.** Conciliators are able, without words, to intuit things about people, projects, and the best way to do things. Conciliators often excel when they love what they are doing, but can lack discipline and have a hard time completing projects.
- **Conceptors.** Conceptors are able to actually conceive a logical way to accomplish a task that may sound far-fetched at first and then convince skeptics. If conceptors have enough self-discipline, they can go on to make industry breakthroughs.
- **Deliberators.** Most business executives tend to be deliberators. They have the ability to balance several routine tasks while maintaining a rational approach

to the business at hand.

After you get a clear sense of your staff's strengths, you'll be able to leverage their thinking styles by allowing them to think creatively.

You may also want to group people who think differently into teams. For instance, Alice may conceive an ad campaign that she knows has the potential to be wildly successful, but as a conciliator she is unable to conceive how to actually pull it off. Realizing this, Alice's boss assigns Joe to help her. As a concepthor, he's able to figure out how to do it and convince the client to take a leap and try the new approach.

Tip

As a leader, you are responsible for figuring out your employees' thinking style, but it may be very beneficial to apply the same magnifying glass to yourself. If you find, like most managers, that you are a deliberathor, you may want to spend more time leveraging the intellectual capital of the knowers and conceptors on your team.

How to Foster Creativity

So you've realized that you have some knowers, conciliators, conceptors, and deliberators on your team, but you need to get them to think beyond the end of the day.

First, you'll need to let your employees know that the rules are changing. By asking for their ideas or even asking them to think of new ways to do an existing job, you're acknowledging that you are human, you do not hold all the answers, and you're willing to ask for help.

In most cases, this has the added benefit of raising morale. Fostering creativity makes a staff feel appreciated as individuals. Now they'll work even harder to let you know you've made the right decision.

Your relationship with your employees also has to become more *permissive*, or open and flexible. Your staff needs to know that they can come to you with ideas.

Here is a sampling of some ideas that may help get your team thinking creatively:

- You might want to begin with a good, old-fashioned brainstorming session with a relatively general focus. For example, go around the room and ask each of your staff members to give one idea of a way to improve your unit or product.
- Ask your employees to push themselves to come up with one new idea a week—large or small. A boss once told me that I should be able to point to at least one innovative thing that I had done to improve our business every month.
- Keep your group informed of the challenges your business unit faces. Consistently ask them what they would do to solve a particular problem.
- Make it clear to your staff that no idea is too wild. Employees sometimes fail to innovate because they are scared to mention a good idea they may consider outlandish, inadequate, or silly.
- Let your staff know that it's okay to make mistakes. Not all ideas, regardless of how great they sound and how feasible they may be, end up working.
- Be sure to let the entire staff know when an employee's good idea is implemented.

Caution

Make sure your staff understands the difference between discussing a new idea and actually implementing that idea. Employees should never be encouraged to strike out on their own without management's knowledge and approval.

Directing Creativity

Three cheers for creativity, but creativity for creativity's sake could be a bad thing. As a leader, it's up to you to subtly keep your team thinking of your primary goals as a unit.

You might set an example to show your group what kind of ideas you're looking for. Or you might keep a list of the top ten creative ideas your staff has submitted. Last, you might hold a meeting to share innovations other businesses in your industry have accomplished, to get your team thinking outside their cubicle walls.

Rewards

Consider setting up a financial rewards system, as outlined in [Lesson 6, "Managing Performance,"](#) to further formalize the creative process in your organization. Letting your employees know their reward won't be just a pat on the back could get their creative juices flowing.

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Using Humor to Get Results

Humor and laughter can be excellent additions to the daily grind. When people share a laugh, they begin to feel less formal and more comfortable with one another.

Associating the positive feeling of laughter or happiness with the workplace has the added benefit of making a job or task enjoyable.

But how to introduce humor? Should you, as the leader, set up a microphone and perform a stand-up comedy routine each Monday morning? Probably not. Remember, you want your staff to laugh with you, not at you.

One way to bring humor into the workplace is to set an example by sharing some personal anecdotes with your employees. For example, chat with an employee about something funny your pet did.

Tip

Although a few "You won't believe what I did" anecdotes can be helpful, avoid ridiculing yourself too much when communicating with your employees. Letting them know you're human is good; letting them know you're too human could erode your power base.

Boundaries

Over the weekend a buddy recounted an incredibly humorous but sexual joke to you on the golf course. You spent the rest of the weekend passing the joke on to more friends. However, stop and think before sharing the joke with your subordinates, and even your equals and superiors.

Although humor is welcome in most settings, the workplace is not the place to share certain comic material. A good way to test whether something is acceptable is to imagine telling the same joke to a group of children. Would it be appropriate? That's not to say employees are children, but often the same subjects that are taboo to raise with children are also taboo in the workplace.

Here's a list of topics to avoid in the workplace:

- Sexually explicit material
- Jokes dealing with gender or sexual orientation
- Ethnic or racial humor
- Religious humor

The 1980s and 1990s saw a huge rise in awareness of sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Although a joke may seem harmless to you, it could be incredibly offensive to someone else.

Humorous E-Mail

The age of the Internet has brought with it a whole new humor outlet. On any given day, I probably get 10 to 15 humorous e-mails. Although these messages are often funny, it is best to avoid passing them along to your employees in most cases.

Many companies are penalizing employees for using e-mail systems for personal purposes. Forwarding humorous e-mail to your staff could be seen as setting a bad example.

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Socializing

As a leader, you should expect your staff to do their jobs and work in harmony. If you had to stop and read that sentence again, you probably have leadership or managerial experience. Getting a staff to work in harmony, or *gung ho*, is easier said than done.

Plain English

Gung ho is a Chinese term meaning "work together." The term was first adopted by U.S. Marines in the 1940s.

Using humor is one way to keep an organization in good spirits. Another way is to recognize people as individuals and to acknowledge that they have a life outside the organization.

You can do this by organizing semiregular social gatherings for your group. Even something as casual as declaring each Friday morning bagel day can produce the desired effect.

Giving your team the green light to communicate outside the context of their jobs will help to build camaraderie and relax the atmosphere.

How to Encourage Socialization

Large corporations often host holiday parties to reward employees for a job well done. However, there's no need to wait until December. Here are some ideas for encouraging organized socialization in your group:

- **Breakfast on the boss.** Once a week, or once a month, spring for bagels or doughnuts and/or coffee for your staff.

- **Timeout for birthdays.** Each month, have one small afternoon gathering for everyone in the organization who celebrates a birthday that month.
- **Make friends with newcomers.** Encourage older employees to take a new employee out to lunch. New employees can often feel like outsiders. Jump-start their inclusion in the workforce by giving them the opportunity to cultivate friendships with other employees.
- **BBQ on the boss.** If you have a small enough staff and feel comfortable with it, invite your staff to your house for a barbecue. However, both you and your staff will feel better if you set up rules. For instance, instead of merely saying that the barbecue begins at 7 P.M., say the barbecue will last from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. That way, they won't feel guilty for leaving and you won't have anyone in your house until 2 A.M.

How Not to Encourage Socialization

Although some social outlets are a good thing, make sure they remain the exception rather than the rule. Your group needs to continue to identify the workplace as just that: a place where work is done.

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The Power of Persuasion and Manipulation

One of a leader's most powerful tools must be the power of persuasion. Some consider leadership to be solely the ability to make people want to do what they would normally not do on their own. Although it encompasses more than this sole quality, the power to *manipulate* your staff is the means to this end.

As a leader, you set goals. As a leader, it is your vision that is being fulfilled. And, as a leader, it is your job to motivate and persuade your group to fulfill those goals and to realize that vision.

Manipulation is often viewed as something untrustworthy or underhanded, and it certainly can be. However, you can safely use subtle manipulation to influence a person to do something that's in the best interest of that person and the organization as a whole.

Plain English

Manipulation is the ability to skillfully and subtly manage something or someone to one's own advantage or the advantage of an organization. The word *manipulate* most often has a negative connotation.

Here are some techniques to use when you need to persuade a member of your group to do something:

- **Provide context.** Give a sense of the importance of a particular task or project to the organization as a whole. People can get so involved with a particular task that they forget where it fits into the big picture.

- **Feign ignorance.** If someone has missed a deadline or is not doing a job correctly, pretend you aren't clear about what she is doing and need to review. For example, Bess is a week behind in turning in some sketches that are critical to a big campaign. Her boss, Susan, asks her casually what deadline she had given Bess. Bess, of course, admits to being a week behind schedule. Susan then gives Bess a few more days to complete the project and checks to make sure she'll be able to complete the work in that amount of time.
- **Make them think it's their idea.** Involve employees in decision-making, but influence them in the direction you've already decided to take. For instance, Frank wants to create a manual for how to work correctly on his team. He knows that Brian would be great for the job of writing it, but Brian does not take well to being ordered to do something. One day Frank mentions to Brian that he is a model employee and that every employee could benefit from his gift for imparting knowledge. Brian then suggests writing the guide himself.
- **Hand out rewards.** Let an employee know that if he or she performs well on a given task, there could be a bonus, raise, increased responsibility, or even a promotion waiting for him.

Remember, as a leader you have the responsibility of gaining and maintaining the trust of your subordinates. Use your power to persuade and manipulate constructively, and the organization will benefit.

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- Creativity can greatly benefit a company by harnessing a staff's intellectual capital and encouraging conflict of ideas in order to arrive at the best possible outcome.
- Appropriate humor allows employees to feel less formal and more comfortable with one another.
- Encourage a moderate level of socialization in your group. Communicating about topics other than work can put employees at ease.
- Manipulation is the ability to skillfully and subtly manage something or someone to one's own advantage or the advantage of an organization.

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Lesson 10. Avoiding Micromanagement

In this lesson you'll learn the definition of micromanagement, the characteristics of a micromanager, and how to trust your team and tolerate mistakes.

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Defining Micromanagement

As leaders, we like to think of ourselves as infallible, and often as the only person who has a full grasp of the work our teams do.

There is, however, a fine line between being aware of the work your team is doing and being an outright nuisance to the individuals in your group. If the second half of that sentence sounds familiar, you may be a micromanager.

Plain English

Micromanagement is excessively controlling the individuals in one's group. This often stems from a lack of trust or faith in employees' abilities.

Ted was the manager of a moderate-sized group of 10 employees at a Web design firm. As an individual contributor, Ted had a track record of turning out incredible pages with innovative designs.

Ted's employees were also gifted Web designers. However, Ted rarely gave them free reign to come up with new designs. In fact, when a group member was assigned a new project, Ted would often tell that group member how the page should look when it was completed and what steps to take to get there. Then, Ted would continually check in with the employee to make sure the project was progressing according to his plan.

Ted's leadership style could only be described as micromanagement. His controlling actions affected his group negatively in several ways:

- Because Ted was treating all of his employees the same way, he constantly had too much on his own plate. By viewing their individual projects as his

responsibilities, he consistently overwhelmed himself. This affected Ted's ability to effectively lead and manage his group.

- Ted's insistence on making all decisions and constantly correcting his employees stunted the group's natural creativity, skill, and innovation, the very qualities they were hired for.
- Ted's micromanagement alienated his staff members. Not only did they feel they were being babied, they felt as if their boss didn't have any faith in their abilities. This bred low morale in Ted's group as the employees started sharing their negative impressions of Ted with each other.
- Because Ted insisted on checking employees' work every step of the way, the amount of work his group completed was nowhere near the amount other groups were producing. Senior management noticed this, and it reflected badly on Ted's leadership abilities.

Ted was a micromanager. Paying too much attention to every single detail of the work being done in his group actually had an adverse effect on Ted, his employees, and the work done in his unit.

Caution

Micromanagement always backfires! Micromanagement is a trap that will leave a leader bogged down in a morass of details—truly an example of not seeing the forest for the trees. A leader needs to keep a more overall view of the work being done in the group or organization.

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Spotting a Micromanager

If you think you may be a micromanager, or you simply want to know how to avoid becoming one, here are some clues to watch for:

- **Twenty questions.** You assign a project to a group member. Every evening on your way out the door, you stop by that individual's cubicle and quiz him mercilessly on the progress of the project.
- **The right way.** You continually check up on the work the individuals in your group are doing because you're convinced they'll botch the job. You feel constantly obligated to enlighten your employees with the correct way to do something.
- **Clock watching.** You keep track of what time each employee arrives for work and leaves, not to mention timing their lunch breaks.
- **My way.** You rarely ask group members for their opinions in meetings. Can you even remember the last time a group member was responsible for a new process in your department?
- **The weight of the world.** You feel as if you are alone at the helm of a group of children. Who are these people and how did you get stuck with such incompetence? Why don't they think more like you?

Tip

Sure, micromanagers pay too much attention to the details. But that doesn't mean that it is wrong or bad for a leader to be aware of the details of the work being done in the group. But when the leader's primary focus shifts from the big picture to the details, it can be troublesome.

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Curbing Micromanagement

So, you're a confirmed micromanager. How do you change your micromanaging ways and turn your department around at the same time?

To end your tendency to micromanage, try some of the following methods.

Distance from Details

It will be hard at first, but to curb micromanagement you must ease yourself away from the details you've been focusing on so closely. Remember, you cannot do everything yourself. You are a manager, a leader, not a team member. Your skills to delegate and manage others must be your prime focus now, even if you are incredibly experienced at the type of work the people in your group are doing.

Establish Trust

If you're in the habit of checking up on each of your employees every day and correcting their natural work habits or tendencies, you need to learn to leave them alone. If you do this too much, they may start ignoring their natural business instincts and just think about what you would do in that situation. This stunts the development of an employee's own problem-solving abilities and will make creativity a rare commodity in your group.

To continue the preceding example, once Ted realized he was a micromanager, he swiftly set about changing his ways. To establish trust, he limited the checks of his staff's progress to weekly design meetings in which each employee reported on his or her progress and new proposals for projects.

This allowed the individuals to start showcasing and developing their talent. The meetings also encouraged healthy, competitive debate between the staff members and

with Ted.

Mistakes Happen

Surely, in your years of experience, you've made a mistake. Instead of damaging your career, it is more likely that the mistakes have served as some of your best lessons. Mistakes are invaluable teaching tools that are often more memorable than successes.

You must allow your employees to make mistakes as well. This will give your employees their own experiences with right and wrong and will pay off in their future performance, much like your mistakes did for you.

Tip

Mistakes can actually give a leader the chance to step in and help an individual who may have been struggling with his or her work. Whereas a micromanager is viewed as controlling by constantly correcting, a manager who waits until an employee makes a mistake is viewed as a coach, stepping in to help only when an employee needs it.

Give Others Confidence

One characteristic all micromanagers share is the belief that they can do any job better than their employees can. This has a crippling effect on the employees' confidence. As discussed in [Lesson 7, "Improving Your Team,"](#) projecting confidence is an extremely important part of the development and success of individuals and the team as a whole.

Once Ted witnessed the resourcefulness of his staff in his weekly meetings, he set about building their confidence by complimenting them regularly, asking their opinions on decisions affecting the business unit, and saying things like, "That's a great idea. It never even occurred to me. Thanks."

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Being a Macromanager

The key to ending micromanagement lies in learning to trust the individuals in your group and knowing how to delegate tasks to them, or being a *macromanager*.

Once you begin delegating the work, you'll find that you have more time to concentrate on higher-level leadership work, such as charting a course for your unit in the coming months and years.

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The 30-Second Recap

- A micromanager is someone who excessively controls the individuals in the group. This often stems from a lack of trust or faith in the employees' abilities.
- Micromanagers constantly check and correct the work people in their group are doing.
- To curb micromanagement tendencies, try establishing trust in employees and understanding that mistakes will happen and are part of the learning curve.
- Macromanagement is a much more effective model for leadership than micromanagement.

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Lesson 11. Transformational Leadership

In this lesson you'll learn about transformational leadership, the qualities of a transformational leader, how to plan for long-term success, and how to achieve some relatively quick successes.

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Defining Transformational Leadership

As mentioned in [Lesson 3, "Leadership Styles,"](#) transformational leadership is the style of leadership a manager uses when he or she wants a group to push the boundaries and perform beyond the status quo or achieve an entirely new set of organizational goals.

When Lee Iacocca took the helm of the Chrysler Corporation, his vision and use of transformational leadership were integral to the renewed success of the American automobile company in the face of the almost uncheckable Japanese car industry of the early 1980s.

Plain English

A **transformational leader** is a leader who is capable of bringing about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.

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Qualities of the Transformational Leader

The qualities of a transformational leader include the following:

- **Charisma.** A transformational leader is one who has a clear vision for the organization and is able to easily communicate that vision to group members. For example, a transformational leader can easily detect what is most important to individuals and to the organization as a whole.
- **Confidence.** A transformational leader has a good business sense and is able to see what decisions will positively affect the organization. This gives the leader the ability to act confidently, inspiring trust in team members.
- **Respect and loyalty.** A transformational leader inspires respect and loyalty in individuals by taking the time to let them know they are important.
- **Expressive praise.** A transformational leader is often expressive in praising individuals and the team on a job well done. Letting them know how much they contributed to one success will steel them for future challenges.
- **Inspiration.** A transformational leader is a master at helping people do something they weren't sure they were capable of doing. The leader achieves this through praise and encouraging statements.

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Working Toward Transformation

No matter how charismatic or innovative the leader, transformation of an entire organization, or even a unit, does not happen quickly. Most transformations involve changing the *corporate culture*—often from one of stale clock-watching and low risk to one of innovation, moderate risk, and competition.

Plain English

Corporate culture is defined as the average and accepted behavior, atmosphere, values, attitudes, dress, business practices, and philosophy in a given organization. Even if you aren't working for a large corporation, you'll recognize that cultures exist wherever people work together in teams.

Changing how a large group of individuals works and thinks is not an easy task. Calling a meeting and telling the organization en masse that they are expected to change will not work. To change the entire organization, a transformational leader must start with the building blocks of the organization: the individual contributors.

Individualized Attention

You have your vision for the future of your group, and your employees are aware of that vision. But no matter how lofty the goal, no matter how big the envisioned win, pep-rally-style speeches often do little to motivate the individual. This is because the individual is often motivated to change only when it is for the greater good of self, not for the greater good of the group.

A transformational leader must evaluate the individual contributors in the organization and discover how to motivate them by playing on their sense of self-interest. This does

not mean that if you employ 2,000 people that you need to sit down with each of them and find out how to light a fire in them. However, you could meet with a representative sampling of those individuals.

Also, if you do employ 2,000 people, chances are that you have some intermediate-level managers who could also use some motivation. The philosophy that you pass on to your direct reports will trickle down to their direct reports.

Looking Beyond "Me"

Once you discover how to motivate your group by appealing to their self-interest, try to communicate to them what effect their work has on the entire organization.

Often, when a person realizes that his or her position really does make a difference, he or she will find a new respect for his or her place in the organization. Individuals will then be working for the benefit of themselves as well as the benefit of the organization.

Motivating Groups

Figuring out the individuals who make up your unit is only half the battle. The successful transformational leader must also learn how to communicate to groups within the organization his or her vision and the need for change.

Danielle is responsible for running a chain of high-end bakeries. New to the job, she wants to turn the organization around and beat its only competitor. Although she recognizes that the individuals working at each store know their jobs well and have years of experience in the business, she wants to reinvigorate the group and get them to commit to new organizational goals that will position the company better in the increasingly competitive market.

Danielle is familiar with the individuals in her group, but now she must turn to some tactics that will help the group pull together as a team and bring about organizational change.

To do so, a leader can try the following motivators:

- **Rewards.** A leader can raise the group's awareness of rewards for bringing about positive change. For example, if you have a formalized reward system, such as merit bonuses, make sure your employees are aware of the policy. Also, you might make it clear to the group that their success will contribute to a larger win for the organization, which could result in increased business. Increased business, in turn, would come back to the employees in the form of increased prosperity.
- **Urgency.** An integral step in bringing about organizational change is helping your group recognize the sense of urgency for creating that change. A leader might say that if the organization does not change now, it may be too late in the future. For example, most companies in the mid-1990s needed to start paying attention to the Internet and how their businesses would integrate the Internet into their way of relating to the customer. Even companies that have nothing to do with media or communications have developed a strategy for embracing the Internet.
- **Excitement.** To bring about organizational change, a transformational leader must also discover a way to get people excited about being part of a sweeping organizational change—for example, helping the group to understand that their efforts will bring about an industry innovation.

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The 30-Second Recap

- A transformational leader is capable of bringing about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.
- The qualities of a transformational leader include charisma and confidence, which allow the leader to influence and inspire the group.
- To inspire a group to organizational change, make sure your employees are aware of the possible rewards, then invest them with a sense of urgency and excitement.

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Lesson 12. Troubleshooting

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Preventing Problems

No matter how prepared the leader, no matter how grand the vision or inspiring the work, problems tend to crop up. No matter what business he or she works for, a leader is really in the business of people. The individuals and teams that make up an organization are often the most volatile and risky part of that operation.

Caution

Don't blame yourself! Just because all your plans aren't going off without a hitch does not mean that you are a bad leader. Remember, people are a volatile work material and do not always perform as expected.

Certainly, using a rigorous interviewing process can minimize problems. An individual's ability to work well with the team is as important as his or her skills.

Interviews give the leader a chance to preview the education, skills, and work experience of a potential employee. Equally important as a person's technical know-how is the candidate's ability to fit into the corporate culture of a given organization.

This means that before hiring someone, the leader must try to determine whether a potential employee can treat coworkers civilly, function as a member of a team, or be comfortable in a largely self-managed position.

Another preemptive step that's gaining popularity in today's corporations is giving seminars to let employees know what is appropriate workplace behavior. Seminars can cover all topics that relate to how employees conduct themselves within the organization—from warning employees about insider trading to asking them to refrain

from telling discriminatory jokes in the office.

Even if you work in a smaller-scale company, you can benefit from conducting a seminar for your employees. You might include topics such as your mission statement, accepted behaviors, expected performance, and how team members are evaluated and rewarded.

Just be prepared to stand by the statements and to work under the same conditions that you ask your employees to work under. For instance, if you ask your employees not to wear shorts because they work around dangerous equipment, don't show up for work in shorts yourself. Even though you may not directly work with the equipment, you could be setting a double standard that will cause resentment.

Tip

Once your employees are aware of what is expected of them, try reinforcing that message by creating posters containing that information and hanging them around the work area. This will be a constant reminder of valued work behaviors.

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Recognizing Problems

Despite a rigorous interview process and the best-presented seminars, problems will crop up in any unit or organization. Beyond interviewing and letting your employees know the expected work behaviors, you must learn to recognize problems in the early stages.

The leader who fails to realize developing problems in the team, unit, or organization won't accomplish organizational goals and will probably suffer a loss of authority.

Individual Problems vs. Systemic Problems

You must also recognize the scope of the problem: Is it individual or systemic? Individual problems, as the name implies, are limited to one person—for example, a particular employee who is unable to understand a key business concept.

By contrast, systemic problems involve more than one person and often spread quickly. Examples of systemic problems include misinformation spreading throughout an organization and having a negative effect on morale, or a group of employees using company-owned equipment for a side business.

Identify the Symptoms

Some telltale signs usually accompany problems. The following signs apply to both individual and systemic troubles:

- **Negativity.** Employees exhibit a pessimistic attitude. For example, an employee may openly say, "I'll never finish this project on time. I just don't get it."
- **Gossip.** If something is going wrong, you can bet that more than one person in

the group is aware of it. To err is human, but so is the tendency to discuss the ills of an individual or organization.

- **Loss in productivity.** Productivity often drops when an individual or unit is troubled. For example, when morale is low, employees can easily develop a hopeless attitude about work, leading to losses in quality and quantity.
- **Challenging authority.** If employees feel there is a problem, often they will attribute the cause of the problem to their leaders. Leaders are the ones who have the vision and set the organizational goals, so when things go wrong on a large scale, employees can lose confidence in the organizational leadership. Employees then begin to challenge the person they consider to be an ineffective leader.
- **Resignations.** Are employees jumping ship? If so, this could be symptomatic of a serious problem. The resignations are significant because the employees would rather quit than continue to work toward the organizational goals.
- **Concrete evidence.** Limited to problems such as embezzlement and workplace violence, concrete evidence includes keeping track of employees' equipment, corporate credit card accounts, and any reports of hostility or unprofessional behavior.

Tip

Keep the lines of communication open with your group members. Much as Sherlock Holmes believed a criminal would unwittingly confess his crime if he kept talking, group members often betray their doubts, fears, and gossip in casual talk with a leader.

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Resolving Problems

Now that some of the telltale signals of problems have been discussed, how does a leader take the initiative to confront the problem and eliminate it?

As stated previously, behaviors including negativity, gossip, and a drop in productivity are symptoms of a problem. Be careful not to confuse the symptom with the real problem. A leader must be prepared to take the time to diagnose the real problem behind the symptom.

A Case Study

Bob noticed that his staff was growing increasingly pessimistic after his company announced a coming reorganization. He didn't understand the problem. His unit had continually surpassed its goals from quarter to quarter. And the hint of a coming reorganization had already pleased Wall Street, evidenced by a large bump in the company's stock price.

When Bob finally held a staff meeting to discuss the deteriorating group morale, he found that the employees were concerned that they would lose their jobs in the coming reorganization.

Armed with knowledge of the real problem, Bob assured them that because they were leading performers, upper management had already guaranteed that the department would keep all positions. Soon after the staff meeting, Bob found that his team's morale and productivity were back to their normal high levels.

Caution

Don't treat the symptom! When you notice a decrease in productivity or morale, spend the time to find out the real cause behind the symptom. If you take the quick route of treating only the symptom, problems are likely to crop up again later.

Problem-Solving Methods

Whether a problem is individual or systemic, once you've determined the core cause of the trouble it's time to take action and use your problem-solving skills to change a bad situation.

Remember, workplace problems are many and varied, so you will need to evaluate and deal with each one individually. For example, what may work to motivate one employee may have the opposite effect on another.

Some options include the following:

- **Positivity.** If negative attitudes and talk are permeating your team, first find out why. Then dissect the problem, finding a few positives to help turn around attitudes. For example, if a group is reeling from defeat by another unit or company, point out the positives about your team's work, emphasizing how easy it would be to win the next battle with a few minor changes.
- **Honesty.** Gossip can be a huge problem in any organization, having a huge effect on morale. However, gossip is usually a symptom of employees feeling that the leadership is up to something and not being straight with the employees. The best solution is to go to your direct reports and be as honest as you can without divulging sensitive material or strategies. Let your employees know that you are being straight with them.
- **Step-by-step.** Dropping productivity can often be a symptom that your group is unsure of how to proceed or doesn't understand the organizational goals and how their work fits into those goals. First make sure that your staff is aware that their hard work, creativity, and dependability are noticed and vital to the organization. Then try breaking a goal down into more easily accomplished steps. This will help give employees a sense of job satisfaction and teach them the pace at which they need to be working.
- **Don't cave.** If employees are pessimistic and not responding well to

authority, don't give in to their whims and demands. A team always needs its leader to be strong, whether or not they currently appreciate that strength.

- **Cut losses.** Not all problems are solvable. If you have continually struggled with a problematic employee and he or she is failing to respond to your best efforts, it may be time to consider letting that employee go. A leader must be prepared for the eventuality of having to "cull the herd" from time to time to maintain a healthy and productive organization.

Tip

One important aspect of the problem-solving cycle is to keep detailed notes. You might make a file for each of your employees and add a note each time that employee is involved in creating or solving a problem. That way, you'll have a track record to refer back to when you need to judge an employee's good or bad work behavior.

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Conflict Resolution

Heated moments can often arise when a group is working together under stressful conditions. However, depending on an employee's temperament, confrontations can occur even on the best of days.

No matter who is at fault, it is up to the leader to resolve conflicts on the team. Whereas debate is healthy, conflict leads only to lowered morale. Often, a conflict involving only one subordinate can affect the entire team, galvanizing employees against the leader.

To resolve a conflict, use these steps:

1. **Remain calm.** The employee who initiated the conflict is likely in a very excitable, volatile state. If you are in the same condition, the chances of coming to a resolution are very small. You must remain in control of the situation and avoid giving the employee the sometimes-desired reaction of seeing you shaken.
2. **Seek privacy.** If the conflict was initiated in front of other group members, ask the employee to go with you to your office or a conference room to discuss the conflict out of the way of prying eyes and ears. The less disturbance the conflict creates for the group, the better.
3. **Determine the real issue.** When an employee feels strongly enough about something to act out, he may cloud the issue by making far-flung accusations and ultimatums. You need to get to the heart of the matter and find out what is really upsetting him. For example, an employee may personally attack your character because he is upset about his salary. Although you may think that he just dislikes you, the real issue is that he dislikes his salary.
4. **Meet the problem head on.** Don't dance around the issues. Now is the time to engage in the conflict and acknowledge any correct facts presented by the

angry party. Then either agree or disagree with the party. In the example given in step 3, a leader might say, "You're right, your work is worth a lot more, but you haven't been here very long. You haven't even been through a yearly review yet."

5. **Solve the problem.** Work with the individual to figure out how to change his or her belief that there is a problem. Or if there really is a problem, work on how to alleviate that problem. You might ask the employee how he or she would solve the situation or what he or she would do differently to avoid the problem in the future. Again, to use the example in step 3, a leader might ask the employee to list the reasons his salary should be increased and ask the employee to make a convincing case for an early increase.

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Winning Over a Hostile Staff

If you are a new leader or are heading up a group that has just gone through a restructuring or layoffs, you are likely to encounter a hostile staff.

In addition to giving their skills and talents, people often make an emotional investment in their work environment. They get used to a particular routine or niche. They get very close to the individuals with whom they work. They also often feel as if they know more about the business than the leaders do.

When that world is rocked, they can become hostile toward the leadership. For example, an individual has been working in the same department for five years. Recently his company was bought by a competitor and his department was downsized. The remaining department was reorganized into a different division and he lost several coworkers.

The employee in question probably isn't thinking that the reorganization and layoffs have made the company leaner and stronger. He is thinking that things were fine the way they were and good friends are now out of a job.

Getting a hostile staff to understand new organizational goals and to return to productivity can be extremely difficult. A hostile staff delivers conflict on a grand scale, but many of the steps for dealing with individual conflict (listed previously) also apply.

Additionally, the following may help:

- Get the group together and let them know that they are still there because of their skills and professionalism.
- Help the group to recommit to old or new organizational roles by restating them and underscoring how the team will contribute to them in the future.

- Reward the group in some way. Have an offsite bowling party or take the entire staff to a movie.
- Take the time to talk to individuals on the team. You may find that when you talk to them one-on-one, employees have a hard time being as hostile as they are when in a group. Connect with each individual about something positive.
- Give the group time to heal. Company upheaval is a difficult time. Once the dust settles, employees will often resettle into a new routine.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Interviewing rigorously and giving standards seminars for existing employees can help prevent problems before they start.
- If there are problems in your unit, you'll usually start to see symptoms, including negative attitudes, gossip, a loss in productivity, resignations, or even physical evidence such as missing equipment.
- Treat the real problem causing the symptoms, not the symptoms themselves.
- Some problem-solving techniques include positivity, honesty, breaking tasks down into simpler steps, remaining strong as a leader, and letting an employee go if repeated attempts at problem-solving have failed.
- To resolve a conflict with an individual, remain calm, diagnose the actual problem, meet it head on, and work with the individual to achieve a solution.
- To win over a hostile staff, try letting the staff know how important and recognized their work is to the organization, talking to each individual in the group separately, and attempting to connect with each person on something positive.
- Keep notes detailing when employees contribute to problems or problem-solving.

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Lesson 13. Nurturing and Mentoring

In this lesson you'll learn how to help your staff grow their talent, and how to be a role model and a mentor.

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Growing Your Staff

Growing a staff is an important part of realizing your organizational vision and goals. Much like a plant needs water and nutrients to survive and bear flowers and fruit, employees must be nurtured and given the benefit of rich experience if they are expected to continually improve their performance.

Plain English

Growing a staff, for the purposes of this book, is the time and effort used to educate, improve, and empower your team.

For example, when you take over as the leader of a team, group, or organization, you are instantly at the helm of a ship staffed by a crew, large or small. That crew may be getting the job done, but is it being done in the most effective way? Is the crew happy? Are crew members educated and motivated enough to figure out a better way themselves?

The reasons for growing a staff are many, benefiting the employees, you, and the organization. The reasons include the following:

- **Skill levels.** By taking the time to mold your staff—as a group and as individuals—you'll improve the standard of the work being conducted. Employees will have more specialized knowledge, enabling them to make more specialized decisions.
- **Happiness.** Employees feel best when they feel they are in motion. By giving them a chance to grow as individuals, morale will improve. Even if their job description remains the same, they'll be able to more creatively attack their

work.

- **Retention.** If an employee perceives that you are interested in his or her growth, you are likely to make an ally of that employee. Taking the time to nurture that employee can build loyalty and help keep a valuable staff member in place.

Empowering employees is a positive work experience, one that can transcend the organizational politics and improve the bond between you and your team.

Nurture, educate, care, and listen. Investing in your group members always guarantees a solid, exponential return.

Caution

As your staff's talent, ability, and grasp of the business improve, some group members are likely to realize their own high growth potential. You will probably suffer minor setbacks when losing a valuable group member to a better job or even another company. Be happy; this is one of the best indications that you are giving your employees important skills.

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Supporting Education

Education can take employees away from immediate job duties; however, corporations are quickly realizing the value of helping their employees acquire more and specialized knowledge.

By helping employees earn their GEDs, learn to speak English or a foreign language, learn a specific skill, or get a master's degree, companies are demonstrating an increasing awareness of the benefits of more education.

Informal Seminars

One form of education that is fairly easy to introduce into a unit or organization is a *seminar*. You may begin by dedicating one staff meeting a month to educating your staff on a specific topic.

For example, Angie wants to help her online magazine staff understand the qualities of a successful Web publication. Although all her employees have journalism backgrounds, only one has previous Internet experience. Angie decides to hold a regular Thursday staff meeting to concentrate on helping her staff to think in terms of the Web.

Each Thursday, Angie gives a presentation about a specific successful online publication. She uses an overhead monitor to give examples about what works on specific sites and also gives examples of absolute flops. She also engages her staff by asking them to rate the sites and to think about how some successful principles could be incorporated into their own site. From time to time Angie invites guest speakers who are experts in the field to talk to her staff.

As a result, Angie's staff are very aware of what plays well on the Internet and are also extremely interested in their work now that they have detailed knowledge of the myriad

options available to them.

Corporate Education Programs

Some larger companies now house their own education departments. These in-house programs usually concentrate on topics relating to how business is done at the company. For example, at Angie's company, classes may range from basic HTML to how to use common Windows applications to how to conduct effective interviews.

The wider the opportunity for taking classes in the workplace, the more contented the workforce. Employees can point to the solid *transferable skills* they've acquired in the workplace, even if they have no intention of leaving.

Plain English

Transferable skills are skills learned at one workplace that would be beneficial for gaining employment elsewhere. For example, HTML is the most commonly used language for putting content on sites on the World Wide Web. A skill such as using HTML, which is not proprietary to one company, is a transferable skill.

Education Reimbursement

Another program gaining popularity in today's workplace is *education reimbursement*. Companies set up programs that pay for an employee's higher education tuition if their field of study is deemed work-related. Often the individual is required to make a certain grade-point average to be eligible for the reimbursement.

If you work in a large company, check with your human resources department to find out whether your company participates in a tuition-reimbursement plan. If you work in a smaller setting, perhaps raise the idea of starting a partial reimbursement program.

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Be a Role Model

"Do as I say, not as I do" is not a sound practice for people in leadership positions. As the head of a team, group, or large organization, you are the most visible representative of your team—both within and outside your group.

Leaders often expect high quality out of employees and expect them to perform to certain standards without applying those same standards to themselves. Remember, being a leader does not make you exempt from work, fairness, or ethics. In fact, these qualities become even more important as you are looked to as an example.

Tip

Mixed messages occur when you say one thing but your actions reveal a different truth. For example, you say you value honesty, but an employee catches you in a lie.

Some of the valued behaviors for role models include the following:

- A leader should not shy away from work. If you know your employees will need to ignore the clock and work extra hours to get the job done, show your employees that you, too, are not afraid to stick around the office after hours. This example will communicate to your staff that you are committed to getting the job done, no matter how much overtime it means.
- A leader should also be aware of the kind of business the entire organization and the specific unit is engaged in. For example, leaders are often chosen because of their leadership abilities, not because they are specialists in a given business. Smart leaders make it their business to become specialists once they

are on the job.

- Communication cannot be stressed too much. Today's professional has available so many different ways of communicating: traditional mail, the telephone, e-mail, instant messages, and good old one-on-one conversations. Show your employees that you are equally comfortable using several different communication media. A leader who confines his communication to e-mail could be perceived as cold and distant.
- A leader must also possess a certain amount of care and concern for his group members. Have respect for your team; remember that not every day is a good day.
- As mentioned previously, integrity is the foundation of any leader's ability to garner respect. As a leader, you have a responsibility to deal honestly and fairly with your subordinates. Employees owe a boss loyalty and obedience; however, respect is a quality that can only be earned.

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Mentoring

Beyond offering education and being an ideal role model for a group, a leader can also greatly help some employees by serving as a mentor.

A leader should be constantly reviewing subordinates for those who can and should advance within the organization. Never fall into the trap of worrying that a bright subordinate will one day eclipse you. The reverse is true: You will be correctly perceived to be an excellent leader when you demonstrate the ability to debut first-rate proteges.

The group member who would respond well to a mentoring is not difficult to spot. You're looking for employees who continually surpass marks set by others, employees who think outside the box and are not afraid of sharing innovative ideas.

For example, John heads up a large unit in a midsized company. He's responsible for over 20 employees, directly and indirectly. His unit is known for high-quality work, which he attributes to a dedicated group of employees who pull together as a team. However, lately he's noticed that one employee, Laura, has pulled ahead of the pack.

Laura innovates, works long hours without complaint, and patiently helps other team members who frequently come to her for help. John is convinced Laura would respond well to mentoring.

Plain English

A **mentor** is usually a person of higher rank or standing in an organization who takes a particular interest in helping to nurture, teach, and guide a promising employee.

A *mentor* can be an incredible help to a developing employee. Much like the apprenticeship relationship in days of old, a seasoned, successful leader can impart significant on-the-job knowledge to the protégé.

A successful mentor fulfills the following roles for the protégé:

- **Coach.** A mentor must remain in close contact with the protégé to help him or her learn fine distinctions in day-to-day business dealings. This continual advice helps the protégé develop skills that would otherwise take years to acquire through trial and error.
- **Challenges.** A mentor will continually find new and exciting work for the protégé to perform. The challenges help the protégé learn new skills and learn how to handle responsibility.
- **Constant feedback.** Once you engage in a mentoring relationship, it is critical to provide constant feedback to your protégé.
- **Support.** The mentor must be prepared for successes as well as failures from a protégé. Try to be there to encourage your protégé to learn from the failures and get past them.
- **Protection.** In a fast-paced and competitive environment, a mentor can also run interference for the protégé, protecting him or her from hostile or difficult high-level managers or situations.
- **Promotion.** As a mentor, you are required to help advertise the merits of your protégé. Let your peers and superiors know how much faith you have in your protégé and what a great future you predict for him. This could help your protégé to be promoted or win increased respect from a wider audience.

Caution

So you've found a worthy protégé, and now you want to dedicate most of your time to coaching that person. Be careful! The rest of your team could suffer a loss in quality as a result of resentment. To alleviate this, choose more than one protégé, or pair some junior employees with more senior members of the staff for their own

mentoring relationships.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Employees must be nurtured and given the benefit of experience and education if they are expected to continually improve their performance.
- You can improve your team's performance by educating the team members using regular group seminars, a corporate training program, or a tuition-reimbursement plan for higher education.
- Transferable skills are skills learned at one workplace that would be beneficial for gaining employment elsewhere.
- Be a role model to your group. Don't send mixed messages by saying one thing when your actions reveal a different truth.
- A mentor is usually a person of higher rank or standing in an organization who takes a particular interest in helping to nurture, teach, and guide a promising employee.

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Lesson 14. Women in Leadership

In this lesson you'll learn about the special challenges women face in getting to and maintaining leadership positions.

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What Difference Does Gender Make?

In the past few decades, women have made incredible strides in the workplace. The playing field is now more level than it has ever been in the past.

Women are achieving more and breaking into the higher echelons of management more often. For example, a woman became the leader at one of the country's biggest computer manufacturers in 1999. Carly Fiorina became president and CEO of Hewlett-Packard after her huge success in spinning off AT&T's Lucent Technologies.

Martha Stewart is another example of a woman who defied the odds to achieve incredible success. Stewart turned a catering business run from her basement into a huge empire including magazines, books, television shows, and specials and products bearing the Martha Stewart name. Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia went public in 1999 to great success, completely attributable to the strong woman leading the company.

Although the corporate gender landscape is changing, successful women leaders remain the exception rather than the rule.

Tip

If you want to be a woman leader, start taking the time to learn about other women leaders. Keep up with news about specific women leaders and studies about leadership and gender. You may learn something that will help you down your own path.

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Getting There

Women are increasingly taking management roles once mainly reserved for men. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of women such as Martha Stewart and Carly Fiorina, it is now generally recognized that women can and should be called upon to shoulder greater responsibility.

However, there are still some things you can do to help ensure that you are considered for a leadership position:

- **Be realistic.** Don't expect to be named VP simply because you are a woman. If you want to be considered an equal, make it your business to be an equal. This means immersing yourself in your work and improving your skills every chance you get.
- **Know your resources.** What is true for men is true for women, too. The road to success isn't that different for women, so use every resource available to hone your leadership skills. For instance, every chapter of this book applies to all leaders and potential leaders, not just men.
- **Find a mentor.** As mentioned in [Lesson 13, "Nurturing and Mentoring,"](#) a mentor can be a valuable teacher, coach, and ally when you're negotiating the path to power. Seek out a mentoring relationship. It doesn't matter whether your mentor is a man or a woman.
- **Speak up.** A position of leadership isn't offered to a shrinking violet of either sex. Be forward. Speak up and let your superiors and peers know that you are resolute and innovative. Also, verbally remind your superiors of your past successes.
- **Come out and say it.** If you are ready for more responsibility, but you feel your superiors are not aware or not sure about your ability, nip their fears in the bud by telling them you are not only ready to lead, but ready to succeed. The

more confident you are in your own abilities, the more confident others will be in you.

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Overcoming Gender Bias

Hundreds of years of male-dominated leadership resulted in women being considered a more subordinate or submissive sex. Although rare, it is still possible to encounter direct or indirect *gender bias* in the workplace.

Plain English

Gender bias is defined as prejudice or discrimination against a person based solely on the fact that the person is of a different gender.

Here's an example of gender bias: Jennifer and Matt started their jobs as assistant producers in the same week. Both were incredibly good at their jobs and worked well with other team members. Their boss, Ken, was equally pleased with the work both of them did.

Over a period of two years, Jennifer and Matt were each responsible for several key successes for their unit. When a senior producer left to join another company, Jennifer and Matt each felt they were the right candidate to be promoted to the open position.

Ken, their boss, didn't really spend much time deciding who would fill the open position. He knew Matt to be a great employee who would continue his success in the new position. He also liked Matt as a person. He could really talk to him, and often they had spent time bantering about work, sports, and life in general.

Without holding interviews, Ken met with Matt only once before announcing to the staff that Matt would take over the senior position.

Jennifer was floored. She felt that her work was equally good, if not better than, Matt's.

She also thought it was unfair that the position was filled without giving everyone a chance to at least submit a resume or make a case for being promoted.

Jennifer was right. Ken's hiring of Matt without so much as a thought for Jennifer or other female employees was an instance of indirect gender bias. Ken didn't consciously want to keep Jennifer in a subordinate position. He just assumed that a guy, who he could relate to on a personal level, would be the best man for the job, so to speak.

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Equal Pay

Let's take this example one step further. Suppose that Jennifer and Matt both had the same job titles, but Matt made a bit more on each of his paychecks than Jennifer. This would be another example of gender discrimination. If Jennifer and Matt perform an equal amount of work, both should be paid the same.

Although there is a federal law requiring equal pay, men continue to make more money than women do. It could be possible that gender stereotypes play a part in this discrepancy. Men are traditionally seen as the breadwinners of the family, and so employers think, perhaps subconsciously, that they deserve more money.

However, federal law also specifies that it is illegal to make employment decisions based on stereotypes or assumptions about the traits or skills of people based on their sex, religion, or race.

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Challenges Women Leaders Face

Once a woman has achieved a promotion or has been welcomed into the higher echelons of management, she's won only half the battle.

A woman may have an excellent track record as an individual contributor; she may have a fail-safe vision for the future of her unit or organization; she may even consider herself easy to talk to and equal to the challenge of managing a group of people. However, any woman in a position of leadership must be prepared for certain challenges directly related to gender, such as the following:

- **Learning curve.** Your group may not be used to working for a woman. Give them time to get used to the concept of not only adjusting to a new boss with a new management style, but also to the fact that you are a woman.
- **Challenges to authority.** Some employees may not immediately warm to being directed by a woman. For hundreds of years, our society placed men at the head of the family and painted women as subordinate and not capable of high-level decision-making. Also, since women leaders are still in the minority, you may be the first female manager your employees have ever encountered. Take care to follow through on policies and assignments with which you have charged your group. This will show your team that you hold them accountable for following through on their work and respecting your authority.

Caution

Don't create problems for yourself! Don't assume that just because you are a woman, people will have trouble working for you. Don't let paranoia trick you into thinking a problem is gender-based. Most leaders experience challenges to their authority.

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If All Else Fails

If you have exhausted every possibility and are confronted with a problem that is definitely gender-related, be sure to document the precise nature of the problem and keep a log of any attempts at mediation.

If a male employee is openly defying your group's goals and making suggestive, snide remarks about your gender, you have a legitimate gender-discrimination problem.

First you might attempt to speak with the employee in question yourself. Make sure that you choose a formal setting for this meeting, such as your office or a conference room, and that your positions relative to each other are in keeping with the power structure. For instance, you should be sitting behind your desk with the employee either standing or sitting somewhere on the opposite side of the room.

Explain that you consider his behavior unprofessional and ask for an explanation. Perhaps there is a deeper issue that is causing him to act out in this way. If all goes well, you may not have to take any further action.

If the behavior persists, however, mention the behavior to your mentor and see if she has any suggestions on how to resolve the situation. Second, make sure to contact your superior and your organization's human resources or legal department.

Human resources may have a standard procedure for dealing with workplace harassment. Human resources should also have Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) material on what constitutes discrimination or harassment.

If resources within the organization fail to help, you might consider seeking outside help from the EEOC itself, a lawyer, or a family member or friend.

The best possible solution will be a speedy one. Don't hesitate to bring a close to the situation—whether it ends happily or with the employee being chastised or dismissed. If left unchecked, the employee could prove to be a major distraction for your group.

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The 30-Second Recap

- If you want to be a woman leader, start taking the time to learn about other women leaders.
- Increasing your skills and finding a mentor could help you on the path to leadership and increased responsibility.
- Gender bias is prejudice or discrimination against one gender based solely on the fact that a person is of a different gender.
- Give employees time to adjust to having a woman leader.
- If you are experiencing discrimination or harassment based on your gender, get help from the EEOC, your human resources department, a friend, a family member, or a lawyer.

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Lesson 15. Young or Minority Leaders

In this lesson you'll learn about some special challenges that young and minority leaders face.

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Young Leaders and the Challenges They Face

What difference does age make? You could argue that experience and the years required to rack up that experience are invaluable and worth as much, if not more than, incredible vision or traditional education.

In the past, the age structure in the workplace was predictable. Young people generally started at the bottom and worked their way up to the top. It took decades to reach the top, by which time they were no longer young. In the past few decades, however, the business world has been undergoing a change in philosophy in relation to age-appropriate roles.

It is probably no coincidence that younger leaders have become more common as technology and computers have become the second Industrial Revolution. Young people tend to be more comfortable with technology than their older peers because most people under age 40 have been using computers since at least their early 20s.

Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard in 1975 to found Microsoft. Considered an upstart by established computer companies such as IBM, he went on to build the most successful software company in the world. At the time this book was written, Gates was the richest man in the world, with an amassed fortune of \$80 billion.

Young leaders can often be successful because they aren't held back by *traditional business practices*, certain ways of working in the system that are learned over time. Since young leaders often lack the years of experience, they forge new and different ways to get things done. Often these methods are more streamlined and quicker than traditional ways, which gives them an advantage over the competition.

Plain English

For the purpose of this book, **traditional business practices** refers to the time-tested, set way of doing things. Traditional business practices are often

ignored by young leaders in favor of finding a newer, quicker way of meeting the same goal.

Although all of the previous examples of young leadership have been positive, there are still some special challenges inherent to being a young leader.

The biggest challenge to a young person in a position of power is the very lack of experience that gives him or her the ability to ignore the old way of doing things. For example, Cindy was a newly minted vice president at a large advertising agency. Her group was in charge of several accounts related to products for infants. One ad campaign in particular was failing and in need of a complete overhaul.

Cindy had some great ideas for the new campaign and was eager to set things in motion to take her ideas through to actual advertisements. As a VP she knew she didn't have to wait for anyone to okay her plan.

Cindy thought that one member of her staff in particular was incredibly resourceful, so she put him in charge of the project. He, too, was new to the company, so they felt a bit of camaraderie.

Cindy and the employee in charge of the project pushed the project through to completion, only to find that it did not measure up to certain standards required by the ad agency.

Where did Cindy go wrong? Her first mistake was in assuming that she didn't need to bounce her ideas off of anyone else. Although approval wasn't required, Cindy should have presented her ideas to her staff and opened up discussion on what worked and did not work in the campaign.

Several of Cindy's employees had been with the agency for years and were well-versed in what passed muster according to the agency's standards. Those same senior employees were also turned off by the fact that Cindy turned the project over to the newest member of the staff—someone who didn't know the proper channels to go through to bring a project to completion. If Cindy had paired the junior employee with another, more senior employee, the project might have been more successful.

So, specifically, Cindy's problems were the following:

- **Inexperience.** Cindy was not aware of the traditional business practices in place at the ad agency. Before defying convention, it's a good idea to find out what the conventional methods are.
- **Lack of respect for seniority.** Cindy should have relied on some of the more senior employees to help her in the first few months of her job. By asking their opinion and enlisting their help, she would have made allies rather than enemies.

Regardless of how good of a young leader you are and how good your decisions are, there will always be a bit of friction from subordinates who are in the same age range or older than you. The best thing you can do in this situation is ignore it. Just continue to lead, making good decisions and relying on your group as normal. If you are a good and ethical leader, your age will cease to be the first thing your employees think about.

Rely on some of the methods discussed in [Lesson 7, "Improving Your Team,"](#) for winning over your staff by giving them confidence, delegating, and giving feedback and rewards. Solid management practices should work for any leader, regardless of his or her age.

Caution

Don't get flustered! If a subordinate or peer challenges you solely because of your age, avoid confrontation. The other party is trying to draw you into a situation in which you lose your cool. If you lose your head and get involved in an argument, he is likely to say it's because you're young and can't handle pressure.

Try to seek out membership in an association tied to your line of work. You will meet other leaders there, young and old, who can give valuable advice.

You could also seek out a mentor to help you negotiate your first few years of management.

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Minority Leaders and the Challenges They Face

Minority leaders still face some of the problems faced by women in positions of power. Until the last few decades, women and minorities were a rarity in public office and in the boardroom.

The same challenges and solutions noted in [Lesson 14, "Women in Leadership,"](#) apply to those of different races or ethnicities. Still, the best advice remains to let your track record, expertise, and successes speak for themselves.

If you find yourself confronted by an unfortunate situation in which you feel discriminated against simply on the basis of your minority status, first keep a detailed written account of the problem. Then contact your boss and the human resources or legal department to file a formal complaint. If this is no help, turn to resources outside your company.

A family member or friend could provide valuable advice and support. You may also want to contact a lawyer who specializes in discrimination cases. If you are unsure how to find one, you can contact the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for a list of lawyers in your area.

Also, even if you don't experience a huge problem, it's a good idea to seek out a mentor in your company—someone who will help guide you through some of the stickier situations you may encounter.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Younger leaders have become more common as technology and computers have changed the face of the workforce.
- Traditional business practices, often ignored by young leaders, refer to the time-tested way of doing things.
- The biggest challenge to a young person in a position of power is lack of experience.
- Young leaders should rely on senior staff members.
- If you find yourself confronted by an unfortunate situation in which you feel discriminated against simply on the basis of your minority status, first keep a detailed written account of the problem.
- Like most leaders, both young and minority leaders should seek out a mentor.

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Lesson 16. Where to Find Help

In this lesson we'll discuss some resources designed to further improve your leadership abilities.

No one leader has all the answers. Fortunately, most good leaders realize that having all the answers isn't the important part. The important part is knowing where to find those answers when you need them.

There are several resources you can use to help you improve your leadership skills. From classes and seminars to the World Wide Web, today's leader has no excuse for avoiding betterment.

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Have Your Own Mentor

One of the most important allies you can have has already been discussed in detail.

[Lesson 13, "Nurturing and Mentoring,"](#) discussed mentoring from the standpoint of you mentoring a subordinate or peer. However, you should also seek out the reverse of that relationship. Even seasoned leaders admit that there is always someone who has been in the game for a few more battles than they have.

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Classes and Seminars

Classes and seminars are a quick immersion technique for learning specific leadership skills. Some colleges and universities offer management and leadership courses in their business schools, realizing the importance of people skills intrinsic to a leadership position. An MBA does not guarantee that you can successfully motivate employees.

Other college courses can also be helpful to future managers. For example, public speaking is effective in teaching you how to organize thoughts and forcefully make a point.

Psychology is another class that may help you to handle leadership responsibilities. In contrast to the kinds of problems that occur when you're working with computers, managing people can be less predictable. Learning how to interpret body language and other signals can go a long way toward helping a leader handle human nature.

Some larger companies include some management classes in their corporate training catalog. For example, your company may offer classes on how to use your time more effectively, communicate better, encourage employees to meet goals, interview, or review an employee's performance. Companies often contract out such classes to companies that specialize in leadership training.

Leadership courses are available also from companies that specialize in leadership training outside the workplace. Some nationally recognized leadership training companies include the Franklin Covey Leadership Center and Frank Lee Associates. You can also find courses in your area by looking in your Yellow Pages under "Career Development" or "Career Training."

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Associations

Several associations exist for the sole purpose of helping their members be better leaders. Other associations are more trade-specific, but can also be beneficial and offer some leadership or management help.

Networking is another good reason to seek out and join at least one association. Not only will you expose yourself to a greater chunk of the working world, but you'll also meet other people with goals and career aspirations that are similar to your own. Consult your local phone book or universities to find the associations in your field or geographic region.

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The Internet

It would be irresponsible to leave out the vast resources afforded by the Internet. What was once a loose bundle of amateur sites posted by the techno-savvy has become an incredible network of information, offering everything from shopping to online churches.

There are myriad sites relating to leadership and management. To search on your own, use an online search engine such as *Yahoo!* (<http://uwww.yahoo.com>) or *Google* (<http://www.google.com>) and type search terms like *leadership*.

Tip

When you find a site you feel has accurate, worthwhile information, see if the site has a Links section that offers paths to other recommended sites. This might help you find the good sites a bit more quickly.

Here's a list of sites to get you started:

- **Ninth House Network**

<http://www.ninthhouse.com/>

Provides the latest news and resources related to improving leadership and management skills. Browse articles from other publications and keep up with the latest trends.

- **FastCompany.com**

<http://www.fastcompany.com/homepage/>

A monthly journal that features articles about leadership challenges and

experience. Also offers online discussion forums.

- **The CEO Refresher**

<http://www.refresher.com/ceo.html>

A monthly newsletter concentrating on topics in leadership and high-level management.

- **The Harvard Business Review**

<http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu/products/hbr/>

For those who want to delve a bit further into the latest research about today's workplace.

- **New Leadership**

<http://www.newleadership.com/frame.htm>

Online resources for women leaders.

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The 30-Second Recap

- Having a mentor and taking classes or seminars can help to hone your leadership skills.
- Membership in a trade association will put you in touch with other leaders facing similar challenges to your own.
- The Internet is a vital resource for keeping up with leadership trends.

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Appendix A. Glossary

analogy

An analogy implies to a listener that if two things agree in one respect, they are likely to agree in several others.

anecdote

A story used to illustrate a particular point.

buzzwords

Insider terminology, used within certain corporate cultures.

charisma

An almost intangible quality that inspires loyalty and great results from subordinates.

communication

The ability to transmit information, thoughts, and ideas so that they are satisfactorily

understood by a listener or listeners.

corporate culture

The average and accepted behavior, atmosphere, values, attitudes, dress, business practices, and philosophy in a given organization. Even if you aren't working for a large corporation, you'll recognize that cultures exist wherever people work together in teams.

creativity

Using your imagination to innovate or create something that is not an imitation of anything else.

delegation

The act of sharing tasks and authority with the team in order to more effectively and quickly accomplish goals—for example, breaking a job down into simpler parts and assigning those parts to different people in your group.

democratic leadership

A democratic leader strives to make sure the group is well informed and participating in the direction of the team as a whole.

dictator

A leader who expects individuals to perform commands without questioning authority.

feedback

Communication to individuals and groups that specifies whether a job is good or bad. Positive feedback reinforces valued behaviors, whereas negative feedback can help to change an individual's performance.

gender bias

Prejudice or discrimination against a person based solely on the fact that the person is of a different gender.

goals

Specific metrics you set for your group to accomplish. Goals benefit an organization in two ways by giving you a way to measure performance and by creating a realistic, simpler way to accomplish large tasks.

growing a staff

The time and effort used to educate, improve, and empower your team.

gung ho

A Chinese term meaning "work together." The term was first adopted by U.S. Marines in the 1940s.

leader

A charismatic person who is able to make good decisions and inspire others to reach a common goal.

management

Specific organizational functions such as budgeting and producing a product. Leadership is a part of management.

manipulation

The ability to skillfully and subtly manage something or someone to one's own advantage or the advantage of an organization. The word *manipulate* most often has a negative connotation.

mentor

Usually a person of higher rank or standing in an organization who takes a particular interest in helping to nurture, teach, and guide a promising employee.

metaphor

A figure of speech that compares two objects not ordinarily associated with each other in order to put the first in context.

micromanagement

Excessively controlling the individuals in one's group. This often stems from a lack of trust or faith in employees' abilities.

mission statement

A document that outlines the overarching business philosophy and ultimate goal of your organization.

nonverbal communication

Conveying a message or idea without using words—for instance, through facial expressions, gestures, stance, or appearance. Also called *body language*.

participation

The act of allowing group members to take part in decision-making, as seen in the "almost" democracy and the partnership styles of leadership.

partnership

A style of leadership that blurs the line between leader and subordinate, requiring the leader to become just one of the group.

positive talk

Speaking in terms of success before actually achieving a given success will help your team achieve a particular goal.

positive thought

Visualizing a success to help take the right actions to achieve the desired outcome.

reward

Valued performance is recognized and reinforced with a reward. Rewards can be verbal, monetary, or in the form of a promotion.

telecommuter

An employee who works from home, often linked to a central office by computer.

traditional business practices

The time-tested, set way of doing things. Traditional business practices are often ignored by young leaders in favor of finding a newer, quicker way of meeting the same goal.

transferable skills

Skills learned at one workplace that would be beneficial for gaining employment elsewhere. For example, HTML is the most commonly used language for putting content on sites on the World Wide Web. A skill such as using HTML, which is not proprietary to one company, is a transferable skill.

transformational leader

A leader who is capable of bringing about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.

vision

A leader's ideas and plans for an organization's future. Idealistic in nature, a vision gives a sense of the differences between the present and future states of an organization.

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Appendix C. Exercises to Help Your Leadership Expertise Grow

Several of these exercises rely on responses to questions from your direct past or a "pretend" scenario. Those exercises do not have right and wrong responses. Answers to the exercises that do have correct responses appear in [Appendix D, "Answers to Exercises."](#)

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Exercise 1

[Lesson 1, "What Is Leadership?"](#) defined leadership and the qualities individuals develop throughout their lives to become leaders. In the following table, based on the list of qualities that make a leader, enter into the "Memorable Person" column someone from your past who excelled in displaying that particular leadership quality.

Leadership Qualities

Leadership Quality	Memorable Person
Charisma	
Knowledge	
Trust	
Integrity	
Standards	
Decisiveness	
Assertiveness	
Optimism	
Results	
Vision	
Appearance of power	

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Exercise 2

[Lesson 2, "The Traits of a Leader,"](#) explained how you can begin to increase your success factor through the use of positive thought and talk, vision creation, and increased confidence. To provide yourself a more accurate assessment of how comfortable you are in emulating these traits daily, try the following exercise.

List each leadership trait in columns on paper, as shown in the following table, along with the column headings "Leader Trait," "Ideal Example," "Special Strength(s)," "Self-Rating," and "Growth Suggestion." Use this table to jot down your thoughts and responses as you consider each of the leader traits listed in the first column.

Leader Traits

Leader Trait	Ideal Example	Special Strength(s)	Self-Rating	Growth Suggestion
Positive thought				
Positive talk				
Developing vision				
Maintaining vision				
Self-confidence				
Inspiring confidence				

Now, as you reflect on the information you read in [Lesson 2](#), consider the individual trait of positive thought and select from your own experience a person who represents the ideal example for this specific leader trait. You may use well-known people as your ideal examples, or individuals from your own personal life—just carefully consider each respective leader trait as you think of your ideal examples.

One good example of someone well-known for positive thought is former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Using FDR as your ideal example, what special strength(s) do you think of when you consider exactly how FDR excelled as your ideal example of the "positive thought" leader trait? (Relax. There is no right or wrong answer for the

"Special Strength(s)" column. Simply select the most important strength you recognize when it comes to considering the leader trait of positive thought.) One possible special strength for FDR might be "optimism." Enter the strength in the "Special Strengths" column.

Now use the "Self-Rating" column to record your personal self- assessment in the positive-thought leader trait category. Rate your current ability as a plus, check mark, or minus (+, ?, or -) as you reference your comfort and ability when compared with your ideal. As you consider your own strengths, don't despair in your self-assessment—remember that you are comparing yourself to someone who you have rated with an extraordinary distinction in a specific leadership trait. Focus on gaining insight into how your ideal person fundamentally operates in a relative sense when compared with you—but don't let your ideal person's extreme aptitude in the special strength area overwhelm you. This exercise is to provide you with insight, not label you as a poor performer in any leader trait area.

Use the "Growth Suggestion" column to record any ideas or insights you may gain, as you examine your ideal person's strengths with your own attitudes and feelings that guide you in the leader trait category. Remember that your own work on these exercises is totally private—a tool you can use only for your personal growth. Keep your thoughts, suggestions, and conclusions to yourself—mastering the role of leader is a very private path.

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Exercise 3

Q:

Lesson 3, "Leadership Styles," differentiated leadership styles and offered you initial information on which leadership style might best suit you. From the following list of leadership characteristics in the first column, select three characteristics that correctly match each of the four leadership styles in the second column. (Note that some leadership styles have more than three characteristics, but, for this exercise, select only three characteristics for each of the four leadership styles.)

Leadership Characteristics and Styles

Leadership Characteristics	Leadership Styles
	Dictatorship:
	1.
	2.
	3.
a. Encouraging debate	"Almost" Democracy:
b. No mistakes	1.
c. Inspiration	2.
d. Group vision	3.
e. Veto power	Partnership:
f. Confidence	1.
g. Participation	2.
h. Charisma	3.
i. Shared responsibility	Transformational Leader:
j. No questions asked	1.
k. Equality	2.
l. Knowledge is power	3.

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Exercise 4

[Lesson 4, "Communicating as a Leader,"](#) taught you how to use effective verbal and nonverbal communication in your role as leader.

To improve your skills of effectively using language and nonverbal communication, you first must obtain an unbiased evaluation of your current communication skills. To attempt to obtain an unbiased evaluation of your communication skills, first select three associates (peers, friends, or relatives) whom you trust as your evaluators.

Second, using a video camera and a timer capable of measuring three minutes, set up a casual scene for yourself from which you will be able to make an impromptu speech, which you may select for yourself. Make your informal speech a subject very familiar to you—for example, discuss some definitive period in your life, a beloved family member, a favorite pet, or something casual like your favorite restaurants or sports teams. Without rehearsal, as though you were talking with an acquaintance or friend, try to create for yourself a sample three-minute video of your "conversation."

This exercise is good for determining how capable you are of speaking "on the fly." Try to speak for the allotted time without much forethought or formal planning. Take a few minutes to reflect on your first attempt, and then make a second version of your "conversation"—maintaining the same subject matter but attempting to add some element of improvement, like more effective eye contact or increased fluidity of thought. But still keep your delivery as impromptu as possible.

After you make your second version of your sample tape, again take a few minutes to reflect on your two previous attempts. This time, if you like, allow yourself to make a few notes to yourself about your sample videotape. Now, make a third version of your sample, again staying on the same subject matter, but pausing to reflect on your few brief notes as you speak for the allotted time. Don't review the tape. Just let it sit until you share it with your selected "evaluators" in a later step of this exercise.

In the meantime, explain to each of your selected associates that you are attempting to obtain an unbiased evaluation of your casual speaking skills in hope of improving some techniques of leadership- oriented communication skills. Explain to each of them how you made your sample tape, and ask each of them whether he or she would be comfortable and willing to observe the tape and provide you some feedback or observational comments. When each selected individual agrees to act as an evaluator of your sample tape, give him or her a copy of the tape—still unseen by you. Ask each evaluator to spend a few minutes on his or her own to view your tape privately and provide you with some general reaction and commentary on the effectiveness, comfort level, confidence, and assertiveness they observed in your taped samples. Ask them especially to compare effort one with two and three, noting any differences—hopefully improvements—you may have made to each successive taping.

Ask your evaluators about areas of the performance on which you may have questions, but continue to gather this evaluative information without reviewing the tape yourself. After you have gathered comments and feedback from all of your volunteer evaluators, make a master summary of the comments, merging any similar data that may reveal itself.

With summary in hand, take some private time to view the tape now, yourself. First, simply view the tape, with the mental awareness of what your evaluators have mentioned to you. When you have viewed the tape that first time, then review in greater detail the summary of comments you have. Now, view the tape again, noting evaluators' comments and making comments and observation on your own. Continue to review the tape until you feel comfortable about comments and observations your evaluators or you may have made about your sample tapings.

Now, with plenty of new information for you to apply, do the entire taping exercise again. This time, once you have finished your third taped sample, review and critique your "conversation" when you have time to give yourself a comfortable, nonrushed review.

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Exercise 5

[Lesson 5, "Successful Speeches and Presentations,"](#) discussed the basics of public speaking.

Giving successful speeches and presentations is, unfortunately, a blend of skills that can be improved only by one thing: practice. If you have already taken classes in public speaking at the high school or college level, and you are relatively comfortable with preparing for a speech or presentation, you must continually practice your delivery. It is also helpful to make videotapes of your speech or presentation as a basis for your own critique, as well as that of friends, peers, or relatives who are willing to be a supportive, helpfully suggestive audience.

Most individuals beginning the leadership path, however, are not comfortable or experienced enough with opportunities for public speaking or delivering presentations that they feel confident to work on improving these skills without some professional or educational guidance. If you are part of this group—and many of you may be—you should begin working on your speech and presentation skills by taking a continuing-education or professional-development–geared class on speaking and making presentations. Your local colleges, continuing education departments, or the Internet may be able to connect you with just the class you need to sharpen your skills without bogging you down with the theoretical basics. You may also want to check out *The 10 Minute Guide to Business Presentations*, by George Kops.

Good public speakers agree: The only thing that makes you a better public speaker is making speeches and presentations, regardless of whether they be for class preparation, your own review, or part of your leadership growth track.

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Exercise 6

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Exercise 6

Lesson 6, "Managing Performance," talked about setting performance goals and measuring performance not only for yourself, but for your team as a whole, as well as individuals within your team. Oftentimes, setting and measuring performance goals sound more complicated than they really are. Individuals new to leadership roles often regard goal-oriented behaviors as being more intellectual exercises than ones geared to ensure progress and achievement.

Fundamental to goal-setting and performance measurement is the ability to take a large activity and divide it into smaller, achievable tasks that can be effectively measured on a simple timeline. Using smaller, more easily defined tasks that you can more accurately measure also gives you a more reliable tool for estimating how long the overall goal and each of its parts may take in the project-planning phase.

Processes for establishing goals and assessing performance are the same whether you are doing so for yourself, individuals on your team, or your team as a whole. Practice in taking a large-scale activity and breaking it into smaller, more easily definable chunks is fundamental to being able to master the activities of setting goals and measuring performance. The following exercise will give you a simple example in setting and measuring goals from which you can build more professional, complicated examples.

In this exercise, you will map on paper how to achieve delivering a chocolate layer cake to the school fund-raiser. The PTA expects you to deliver one chocolate layer cake to them by 4:30 P.M. today, which for our example purposes begins at 8:00 A.M. Your single goal for this day is to deliver the described cake by the assigned time. You can make the cake or buy it, but the steps required for delivering the cake on time will determine your course of action.

Use the schedule below with the times allotted as a primary planning tool. Remember, the more details you plan in the overall process, the better able you'll be to handle close time constraints and monitor the individual tasks that comprise the overall goal.

Goal Description:

Deliver one chocolate layer cake to school PTA fund-raiser no later than 4:30 P.M.

Personnel Requirements:

Resource Requirements:

Special Considerations:

Timetable:

A.M.

8:00: _____

8:30: _____

9:00: _____

9:30: _____

10:00: _____

10:30: _____

11:00: _____

11:30: _____

P.M.

12:00: _____

12:30: _____

1:00: _____

1:30: _____

2:00: _____

2:30: _____

3:00: _____

3:30: _____

4:00: _____

4:30: Deadline for cake delivery at PTA school fund-raiser.

Now that you've worked through this simple example, can you see how to extrapolate the goal-setting and performance-measurement techniques and apply them to more complex business settings?

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Exercise 7

[Lesson 7, "Improving Your Team,"](#) explained how to give your team members more confidence and how to delegate effectively, which is one aspect of leadership many individuals find difficult to do.

Think back to the last comment you recall having made to any one of your employees that you would characterize as being fairly neutral in terms of feedback. For example, suppose you assigned one of your employees the task of creating a sales increase analysis for an entire year broken out by sales individuals. Your employee had to work extra time to provide you with this spreadsheet by the deadline you requested. How did you react when he or she handed it in? Was your comment fairly neutral when compared to the effort expended by the employee (i.e., "Thanks. I'll see how this works when I get a chance.")?

Now, consider how you might rephrase that comment to your employee that would illustrate the most positive reaction you could provide. Try stating your thanks and appreciation to the employee in a variety of positive ways. For example, say, "Thank you very much for working extra to bring this information to me in such a speedy fashion. I'm really swamped with other activities I need to address, but I've set aside special time this evening to take your spreadsheet and work it into our department's annual sales report."

The positive ways you might decide to respond to your employee may be numerous and varied. Write down several versions of the original response rephrased in a more positive light. As you think of each response, consider the improvement in reaction you would receive from your employee simply based on reframing your comment into a more positive reaction.

Original Comment:

Rephrase 1:

Rephrase 2:

Rephrase 3:

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Exercise 8

Lesson 8, "Worst Leadership Mistakes," discussed some of the worst mistakes leaders make and offered basic advice on how to avoid these costly mistakes.

From the following list of issues, can you identify which ones may lead to costly problems or mistakes? Select either Yes or No.

Yes	No	Sample Issue
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accepting a birthday card and surprise cake from your team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking one of your team members' teenage daughter to baby-sit for your kids on a Friday evening.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking back Phase III of the team's current project because you are concerned some critical details might get overlooked.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hiring your brother-in-law as the team's new project coordinator.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	During the most recent staff meeting, one team member, who is often the center of attention for his creative wit, makes several impromptu jokes about the new team policy you present at the meeting. You cut the meeting short and ask this team member to come directly to your office. Once alone, you reprimand the employee for his behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Your most valued advertising copywriter mentions an opening as a manager in your editorial department. You, too, have been thinking that the position would be a lateral move for you, but it would still offer you some small advantages. During the next manager's meeting, the senior editor mentions to you that your team member would be ideal for the position. You still aren't sure whether you might be interested in the job yourself, and you certainly don't want to lose this team member's top-notch contributions, so you tell the senior editor that you don't think your team member would still be a good match for the job due to some recent shortcomings you've observed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	One of your team members plays for the company's softball team each Thursday night. In fact, this player is considered to be one of the more important contributor's to the softball team's success. Because of the "high" this employee gets from his successful softball activity, he also often celebrates to excess after each game at the local pub. Every work morning after a game, the company's other softball players can't stop talking about their softball success—but more important, they can't stop talking about your team

		member's post-game drinking and partying, which rivals any other topic that morning. Each after-game morning, your team member fails to show for work until a couple hours after the rest of the company's employees have been hard at work. Should you overlook your team member's behavior in favor of his value to the success of the company's softball team?
		Because of your team's recent increase in routine demands, you declare Friday mornings as "Donut and Coffee Day," and you supply the treats for your team.
		You dislike fighting traffic to get to your office promptly by the 8:00 a.m.—official work start time—so you decide that on mornings when you feel overstressed, you'll sleep in an extra hour.

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Exercise 9

[Lesson 9, "Nonstandard Techniques,"](#) taught the basics of encouraging and directing creativity and the art of ethical persuasion.

Recall the four types of thinkers defined in [Lesson 9](#): knowers, conciliators, conceptors, and deliberators. If you are currently working with a team, determine the thinker type of each of your team members. If you aren't in charge of a group, create a "pretend" team from peers you work with. With this pretend team, determine the thinker type of each of your team members.

To complete this exercise, create a grid containing five columns. Label the first column with your team members' names, and the second through fifth columns each with a heading of one of the thinker types. The following table represents a sample grid.

Team Member	Knowers	Conciliators	Conceptors	Deliberators
Karen				
Jim				
Laura				
Steve				
Shannon				
Sarah				
Daniel				
Jesse				

On a scale of 1 to 10, grade each team member—either real or pretend—on how they perform in each thinker-type category. Once you have assigned a rating in each category to each team member, make an anticipatory assessment of how to get the differing thinker types working successfully together. For example, how would you get the conceptors working successfully with the deliberators— considering that the two thinker types are somewhat in opposition? How about the knowers and the

conceptors? Work through various combinations of team members with widely varied thinker types, as well as combining similar thinker types.

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Exercise 10

Q:

[Lesson 10, "Avoiding Micromanagement,"](#) explained the concept of micromanagement and how you can avoid falling into the micromanager trap. The following are characteristics of a micromanager as outlined in [Lesson 10](#):

- a. 20 Questions
- b. The Right Way
- c. Clock Watching
- d. My Way
- e. The Weight of the World

See if you can match each of these characteristics with their corresponding descriptions:

____ You keep track of what time each employee arrives for work and leaves—not to mention timing their lunch breaks.

____ You continually check on the work being done by the individuals in your group because you're convinced they'll botch the job. You feel constantly obligated to enlighten your employees with the correct way to do something.

____ You rarely ask group members for their opinions in meetings. Can you even remember the last time a group member was responsible for a new

process in your department?

____ You feel as if you are alone at the helm of a group of children. Who are these people and how did you get stuck with such incompetence? Why don't they think more like you?

____ You assign a project to a group member. Every evening on your way out the door, you stop by that individual's cubicle and quiz him mercilessly on the progress of the project.

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Exercise 11

Q:

Lesson 11, "Transformational Leadership," presented the basics of transformational leadership, including how to quickly experience success with this leadership style. From the following list of traits, can you select the five traits of a transitional leader?

- Spirit
- Inspiration
- Dedication
- Charisma
- Humor
- Confidence
- Caution
- Self-discipline
- Respect
- Loyalty
- Friendliness
- Expressive praise

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Exercise 12

[Lesson 12, "Troubleshooting,"](#) concentrated on recognizing and resolving problems and confrontations. Following is a list of symptoms of both systematic and individual trouble. For each symptom, can you suggest a tactic that might resolve the situation?

Symptom	Suggested Tactic
Negativity	
Gossip	
Loss of productivity	
Challenging authority	
Resignations	
Concrete evidence	
Lateness	
Lack of follow-up	

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Exercise 13

[Lesson 13, "Nurturing and Mentoring,"](#) explained the activities of being a role model and mentor—important attributes for any leadership-growth position. If you think back to certain growth periods in your life, can you identify three different times you learned important information from three different role models? Who were they, and what did you learn from each of them?

Role Models:

1. From this role model, I learned ...

2. From this role model, I learned ...

3. From this role model, I learned ...

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Exercise 14

[Lesson 14, "Women in Leadership,"](#) focused attention on the special issues women face as they strive to become leaders and maintain leadership positions. Given the many positive strides for women in the workplace, you may need to only ask yourself "Are you ready to take charge?" The following questions will help you—today's woman leader—assess your level of preparedness.

1. Are you ready to set yourself apart from others in the workplace as you set your sites on leadership roles?
2. When you think about other women leaders—past and present—who are your three favorite achievers and why?
3. What—so far—is the single most important thing you've learned from another woman in a leadership position?
4. Are you willing to become active in professional organizations focused on furthering women's career causes and the family issues related to them?
5. Will you be content immersing yourself in your work—even if it means sacrificing time you would normally spend with your spouse and family?
6. How do you rate your leadership skills when you compare them with male counterparts who may be your competition?
7. Are you fortunate enough to have a mentor to help you through your leadership process? Name three critical areas where your mentor is of assistance to you as you take on the role of female leader.
8. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your level of self-confidence—especially in male-dominated situations. Next, rate your level of assertiveness—again, in

male-dominated situations. Now, rate your level of determination and innovation.

9. Are you ready to publicly declare yourself on the leadership track?
10. Are you sufficiently "thick skinned" to withstand small-scale comments, noninjurious jokes, and "good-old-boy" initiations without becoming unnecessarily emotional, angry, nervous, or sensitive? Can you "roll with the punches"?

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Exercise 15

[Lesson 15, "Young or Minority Leaders,"](#) addressed some special challenges younger individuals and minority members must work through as they assume roles of leadership.

The following examples outline a challenge that may be faced by young and minority leaders. For each problem, write down three possible solutions that could remedy the situation.

Problem:

You have been put in a position of leadership, and several members of your team are not only a minimum of 10 years your senior, but appear to be slightly resentful of your age.

Solutions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Problem:

You are in the ethnic minority at your company and have been promoted to a position

of leadership. One of the members of your team frequently cracks inappropriate, racist jokes, but doesn't seem to understand that they are a) offensive, b) making you and others uncomfortable, and c) undermining your authority.

Solutions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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Exercise 16

Q:

[Lesson 16, "Where to Find Help,"](#) presented some additional sources that you may find useful as you begin to master the leadership process. Although this lesson discusses establishing mentoring relationships, taking classes and seminars, professional organizations, and Internet resources, it primarily presents one strategic point of knowledge without which becoming a leader is not possible. Without looking back at the list of additional information sources provided, can you recall the single most important thing that effective, successful leaders must know?

Here's a beginning sentence to help you recall this important item of information:

Good leaders realize that having all the answers isn't the most important part. The important part is ...

(Complete the sentence by filling in the blank.)

The correct response appears in [Appendix D](#), along with other relevant correct responses to Exercises 1 through 16.

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Exercise 3

Q:

Lesson 3, Leadership Styles, differentiated leadership styles and offered you initial information on which leadership style might best suit you. From the following list of leadership characteristics in the first column, select three characteristics that correctly match each of the four leadership styles in the second column. (Note that some leadership styles have more than three characteristics, but, for this exercise, select only three characteristics for each of the four leadership styles.)

A:

[Leadership Characteristics and Styles](#)

Table D.1.

Leadership Characteristics	Leadership Styles
	Dictatorship:
	1. No mistakes
	2. No questions asked
	3. Knowledge is power
a. Encourage debate	"Almost" Democracy:
b. No mistakes	1. Participation
c. Inspiration	2. Encourage debate
d. Group vision	3. Veto power
e. Veto power	Partnership:
f. Confidence	1. Equality
g. Participation	2. Group vision
h. Charisma	3. Shared responsibility
i. Shared responsibility	Transformational Leader:

j. No questions asked	1. Charisma
k. Equality	2. Confidence
l. Knowledge is power	3. Inspiration

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Exercise 10

Q:

Lesson 10, Avoiding Micromanagement, explained the concept of micromanagement and how you can avoid falling into the micromanager trap. The following are characteristics of a micromanager as outlined in Lesson 10

A:

a. [20 Questions](#)

b. The Right Way

c. Clock Watching

d. My Way

e. The Weight of the World

cYou keep track of what time each employee arrives for work and leaves—not to mention timing their lunch breaks.

bYou continually check up on the work being done by the individuals in your group because you're convinced they'll botch the job. You feel constantly obligated to enlighten your employees with the correct way to do something.

dYou rarely ask group members for their opinions during meetings. Can you even remember the last time a group member was responsible for a new process in your department?

eYou feel as if you are alone at the helm of a group of children. Who are these people and how did you get stuck with such incompetence? Why don't they think more like you?

aYou assign a project to a group member. Every evening on your way out the door, you stop by that individual's cubicle and quiz him mercilessly on the progress of the project.

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Exercise 11

Q:

Lesson 11, Transformational Leadership, presented the basics of transformational leadership, including how to quickly experience success with this leadership style. From the following list of traits, can you select the five traits of a transitional leader

A:

Charisma

Confidence

Respect

Loyalty

Expressive praise

Inspiration

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Exercise 16

Q:

Lesson 16, Where to Find Help, presented some additional sources that you may find useful as you begin to master the leadership process. Although this lesson discusses establishing mentoring relationships, taking classes and seminars, professional organizations, and Internet resources, it primarily presents one strategic point of knowledge without which becoming a leader is not possible. Without looking back at the list of additional information sources provided, can you recall the single most important thing that effective, successful leaders must know

A:

Good leaders realize that having all the answers isn't the most important part. The important part is knowing where to find those answers when you need them.

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Lesson 15. Young or Minority Leaders

In this lesson you'll learn about some special challenges that young and minority leaders face.

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Lesson 2. The Traits of a Leader

In this lesson you'll learn how to use positive thought and talk to your advantage, develop vision, and build your own confidence.

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Lesson 16. Where to Find Help

In this lesson we'll discuss some resources designed to further improve your leadership abilities.

No one leader has all the answers. Fortunately, most good leaders realize that having all the answers isn't the important part. The important part is knowing where to find those answers when you need them.

There are several resources you can use to help you improve your leadership skills. From classes and seminars to the World Wide Web, today's leader has no excuse for avoiding betterment.

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Appendix A. Glossary

analogy

An analogy implies to a listener that if two things agree in one respect, they are likely to agree in several others.

anecdote

A story used to illustrate a particular point.

buzzwords

Insider terminology, used within certain corporate cultures.

charisma

An almost intangible quality that inspires loyalty and great results from subordinates.

communication

The ability to transmit information, thoughts, and ideas so that they are satisfactorily

understood by a listener or listeners.

corporate culture

The average and accepted behavior, atmosphere, values, attitudes, dress, business practices, and philosophy in a given organization. Even if you aren't working for a large corporation, you'll recognize that cultures exist wherever people work together in teams.

creativity

Using your imagination to innovate or create something that is not an imitation of anything else.

delegation

The act of sharing tasks and authority with the team in order to more effectively and quickly accomplish goals—for example, breaking a job down into simpler parts and assigning those parts to different people in your group.

democratic leadership

A democratic leader strives to make sure the group is well informed and participating in the direction of the team as a whole.

dictator

A leader who expects individuals to perform commands without questioning authority.

feedback

Communication to individuals and groups that specifies whether a job is good or bad. Positive feedback reinforces valued behaviors, whereas negative feedback can help to change an individual's performance.

gender bias

Prejudice or discrimination against a person based solely on the fact that the person is of a different gender.

goals

Specific metrics you set for your group to accomplish. Goals benefit an organization in two ways by giving you a way to measure performance and by creating a realistic, simpler way to accomplish large tasks.

growing a staff

The time and effort used to educate, improve, and empower your team.

gung ho

A Chinese term meaning "work together." The term was first adopted by U.S. Marines in the 1940s.

leader

A charismatic person who is able to make good decisions and inspire others to reach a common goal.

management

Specific organizational functions such as budgeting and producing a product. Leadership is a part of management.

manipulation

The ability to skillfully and subtly manage something or someone to one's own advantage or the advantage of an organization. The word *manipulate* most often has a negative connotation.

mentor

Usually a person of higher rank or standing in an organization who takes a particular interest in helping to nurture, teach, and guide a promising employee.

metaphor

A figure of speech that compares two objects not ordinarily associated with each other in order to put the first in context.

micromanagement

Excessively controlling the individuals in one's group. This often stems from a lack of trust or faith in employees' abilities.

mission statement

A document that outlines the overarching business philosophy and ultimate goal of your organization.

nonverbal communication

Conveying a message or idea without using words—for instance, through facial expressions, gestures, stance, or appearance. Also called *body language*.

participation

The act of allowing group members to take part in decision-making, as seen in the "almost" democracy and the partnership styles of leadership.

partnership

A style of leadership that blurs the line between leader and subordinate, requiring the leader to become just one of the group.

positive talk

Speaking in terms of success before actually achieving a given success will help your team achieve a particular goal.

positive thought

Visualizing a success to help take the right actions to achieve the desired outcome.

reward

Valued performance is recognized and reinforced with a reward. Rewards can be verbal, monetary, or in the form of a promotion.

telecommuter

An employee who works from home, often linked to a central office by computer.

traditional business practices

The time-tested, set way of doing things. Traditional business practices are often ignored by young leaders in favor of finding a newer, quicker way of meeting the same goal.

transferable skills

Skills learned at one workplace that would be beneficial for gaining employment elsewhere. For example, HTML is the most commonly used language for putting content on sites on the World Wide Web. A skill such as using HTML, which is not proprietary to one company, is a transferable skill.

transformational leader

A leader who is capable of bringing about change in individuals and entire organizations, often helping troubled organizations turn around their performance.

vision

A leader's ideas and plans for an organization's future. Idealistic in nature, a vision gives a sense of the differences between the present and future states of an organization.

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Appendix C. Exercises to Help Your Leadership Expertise Grow

Several of these exercises rely on responses to questions from your direct past or a "pretend" scenario. Those exercises do not have right and wrong responses. Answers to the exercises that do have correct responses appear in [Appendix D, "Answers to Exercises."](#)

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Lesson 3. Leadership Styles

In this lesson you'll learn about several different styles of leadership, the merits and downsides to each, and how to determine which style is right for you.

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Introduction

Leadership is never easy. No matter how effortlessly some leaders appear to manage, the path of a leader is one fraught with constant challenge and surprise. However, the leader does not face the challenge alone. By definition, a leader has a group or organization working to meet each challenge and achieve each goal. The leader's job is not to solve every problem alone, but to inspire those he or she leads to solve the problems.

Good leaders recognize that they do not have all the answers and are constantly reeducating themselves on their businesses and sharpening their leadership skills.

In this second edition of the *10 Minute Guide to Leadership*, you will learn the definition of a leader and spend time studying the qualities that are always found in successful leaders.

Beyond personal qualities such as vision and positive thought, a leader must also take careful steps to communicate with his or her staff in the best way possible. Formerly rare processes such as goal-setting, constant feedback, and a system of rewards are now the norm in most workplaces. Some of the most important lessons of this book concentrate on your interactions with your group as a team, but also as individuals.

The later lessons of the book concentrate on some of the unique workplace challenges. For instance, [Lesson 10, "Avoiding Microman-agement,"](#) focuses on the bane of the Dilbertized workplace—the micromanager. [Lessons 14, "Women in Leadership,"](#) and [15, "Young or Minority Leaders,"](#) focus on women and minorities in positions of leadership and the special challenges each faces.

Internet resources are included in the final chapter, which is dedicated to finding help. As the Internet becomes a more central part of our lives and our workplace, familiarizing yourself with it is not only a good idea, but a necessity.

Remember, leaders are not born, but self-made. As you read this book, think about ways you can apply the principles discussed here to your own career.

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Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank two Amys for making my authorship of this book possible. First, Amy Bryant for encouraging me and helping me to find my way to Amy Zavatto at Macmillan USA. Both showed a confidence in my knowledge and ability that helped me to believe I was ready to meet the challenge of writing this book. I'd also like to thank my father, Lieutenant General Thomas W. Kelly, for being a great first leadership teacher, an incredible mentor, and a loving father.

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Lesson 8. Worst Leadership Mistakes

In this chapter, you'll learn about some of the common pitfalls people in a position of leadership fall into and how to avoid them.

Although a leader may strive to manage performance, inspire her team, and gain the support and trust of that team, things don't always turn out as planned.

Caution

Don't overestimate yourself. If you go into a leadership situation thinking you're prepared for and capable of handling any and every situation, think again. A modest amount of egotism is inherent in any leader, but a true leader also recognizes the fact that she will learn as much from her team as her team will learn from her.

If a new leader, you may find yourself in a situation where you are expected to manage a team that has been allowed to become lethargic—in other words, a team that is not used to being led by an effective manager.

Or, you may have an ideal team except for one problem employee. One bad apple may not spoil the whole bunch, but can go a long way toward derailing the goals of the whole bunch.

Last, the new leader may let his lack of management experience show by over-reacting or letting his team see that they are capable of playing on his weaknesses.

Whatever the case, there will be bumps along the road for any manager or leader. Why? Because managing humans is much harder than managing the most sophisticated computers. Humans are complicated, diverse, and imperfect. While those diversities and imperfections are often things to be celebrated, they provide unlimited

opportunities for friction.

This chapter touches on some of the most common mistakes made by leaders, new and old, and offers alternatives and solutions to help avoid these situations.

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In this lesson you'll learn how to encourage and direct creativity, when to use humor, and how to ethically persuade and manipulate your team.

Plain English

Creativity is using your imagination to innovate or create something that is not an imitation of anything else.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: Available upon request.

02 01 00 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Interpretation of the printing code: The rightmost number of the first series of numbers is the year of the book's printing; the rightmost number of the second series of numbers is the number of the book's printing. For example, a printing code of 00-1 shows that the first printing occurred in 2000.

Printed in the United States of America

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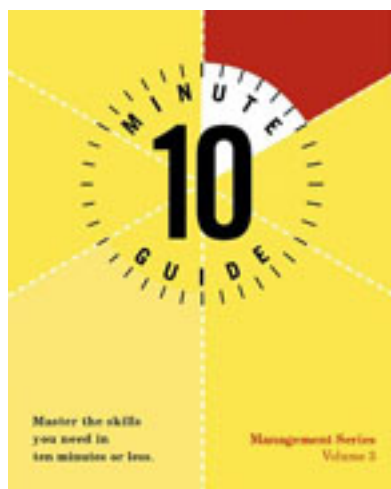
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Elizabeth O'Leary

Publisher: Alpha Books

Second Edition July 21, 2000

ISBN: 0-02-863611-2, 168 pages

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[A][B][C][D][E][F][G][H][I][J][K][L][M][N][O][P][Q][R][S][T][V][W][Y]

C

case study

problem resolutions

CEO Refresher Web site

chalkboard visual aid (presentations)

challenges

minority leaders

young leaders

2nd

characteristics

almost (quotes) democracy

dictatorship

partnership

transformational leadership

charisma (leadership quality)

classes

as a resource

closeness to staff

(leadership trait to avoid)

2nd

communication

importance of

nonverbal

posture , 2nd

using language effectively

speeches

conceptors (type f thinker)

conciliators (type f thinker)

confidence

improving teams

providing to others (eliminating micromanagement tendencies)

2nd

2nd

winning over a hostile staff

cons

dictatorship

partnership

transformational leadership

corporate culture

transformational leadership

motivating groups , 2nd

2nd

directing

encouraging

four types of thinkers , 2nd , 3rd , 4th , 5th , 6th

fostering

rewarding

2nd

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D

decisiveness (leadership quality)

defining

transformational leadership

2nd

definitions

leadership

delegating

improving teams

deliberators (type f thinker)

delivery

speeches

democracy

almost (quotes) democracy

pros , 2nd

2nd

characteristics

cons

pros

2nd

See : cons disadvantages

2nd

discrimination

documenting gender bias behaviors

2nd

2nd

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E

2nd

educational support

analogies and metaphors

anecdotes

buzzwords

high impact words

speeches

accepting mistakes

becoming a macromanager

distancing self from details

establishing trust

giving others confidence

2nd

knowers

2nd

equal pay

gender differences

errors

becoming too friendly with team

competing with own group

lack of adherence to rules

loosing cool

micromanaging

neglecting rewards

replacing key employees

2nd

exhibiting assertiveness

nonverbal communication

expressions

facial

nonverbal communication , 2nd

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F

facial expressions

nonverbal communication

fame

rewarding performance

FastCompany Web site

2nd

firing

team improvement

2nd

2nd

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G

2nd

challenges female leaders face

documenting discriminatory behaviors

equal pay

overcoming gender bias

gestures

hand

nonverbal communication , 2nd

group goals

individual goals

measures of success

mission statements

group goals

group advertising

improving teams

group motivation

changing the corporate culture through transformational leadership

2nd

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H

hand gestures

nonverbal communication

handouts (presentation visual aid)

Harvard Business Review Web site

help

associations

classes and seminars

Internet

Web sites , 2nd

mentors

2nd

hiring

team improvement

honesty (problem resolution)

hostile staff

winning over

boundaries

email

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[A][B][C][D][E][F][G][H][I][J][K][L][M][N][O][P][Q][R][S][T][V][W][Y]

I

2nd

identifying symptoms

troubleshooting problems

2nd

improving teams

advertising groups

delegating

giving your team confidence

hiring and firing

respecting seniority

2nd

identifying symptoms

individualized attention

changing corporate culture through transformational leadership

integrity (leadership quality)

Internet

as a resource

Web sites , 2nd

interpersonal distance

nonverbal communication

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B. Further Readings

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